

JUDAISM

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

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I BELIEVE: The Faith of an Israeli Father

Moses Cyrus Weiler

THE STATE OF RELIGION

and

THE RELIGION OF THE STATE IN ISRAEL

Shlomo Deshen

Stanley Rabinowitz

Evyatar Friesel

Nili Wachtel

ON CRUCIFYING THE JEWS

Michael Brown

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JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication between Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

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JUDAISM

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." *From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.*

The First Reader

I Believe

"Sacrifice is the badge of all our tribe," the poet might have said in describing the Jewish people. The first Jewish family, that of Abraham and Sarah, after years of wandering and childlessness, were finally blessed with a son, Isaac. Shortly thereafter, they were confronted by an agonizing challenge, God's call to sacrifice that only son. In this instance the sacrifice was a test of faith, and the lad was miraculously saved from death. In the thirty five centuries that have followed, the paradigm of sacrifice without the miracle was destined to be repeated thousands of times, reaching its climax in the death of six million Jewish souls—men and women, children and infants.

Even the glory of Israel reborn, the great shining event of Jewish experience in our century, has continued the pattern, exacting a heavy toll of sacrifice during four wars and between them, in which some of our finest sons and daughters died for God and Israel.

Through the ages Jewish sacrifice did not undermine Jewish faith. Quite the contrary. The judgment of the Torah upon Abraham remained true for those who came after him. "He trusted in God and was reckoned as a merit for Him." Both these motifs are basic to the Biblical account of the sacrifice of Isaac, which is read in the synagogue during the High Holy Days and frequently referred to in the liturgy, in order to invoke the mercy of God upon Abraham's descendants and to inspire them with the loyalty that lived in the hearts of the Patriarchs.

The current issue of JUDAISM (Fall, 1978), which appears during the High Holy Day season, opens with a deeply moving, modern testament of faith, "I Believe," written by *Moses Cyrus Weiler*. The author was born in Israel (then Palestine), educated in his native land and in the United States, and ordained by the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Then he served as chief rabbi of the Reform congregations of South Africa for many years, until he settled with his family in Israel. It was his tragic destiny to offer up the supreme sacrifice, not once, but twice. Two of his sons died in Israel's wars against its enemies. How could he sustain his faith in God and His purposes? In a *dvar Torah* spoken at the *Mevakshet Derekh* before *Yizkor* on Yom Kippur of 5737 (1976), he gave his answer.

The State of Religion and the Religion of the State in Israel

The eyes of the world and of world Jewry are riveted on Israel's foreign policy and on the dangerous Arab-Israeli situation. However, there are domestic problems in Israel of major dimensions,—social, economic, cultural and political.

Perhaps the most intractable of all is the religious one. The Orthodox

political party has a constituency of less than 20% of the population, but its votes in the Knesset are essential to create the needed majority of the Likud government. Using this political advantage and conscious of the fact that Menahem Begin is wholeheartedly committed to Orthodox political theology, if not to Orthodox personal piety, the religious Establishment is moving ahead to make the State the secular arm of Orthodoxy and to give it total control of Israeli religious life in all areas—public recognition, financial support, access to the media, and education. If this government-supported monopoly succeeds, its effects will extend far beyond the State of Israel. It will be used to relegate the majority of Diaspora Jewry, who are overwhelmingly not Orthodox, to second-class citizenship in the Jewish people with all the disabilities and indignities thereunto appertaining.

At the last World Zionist Congress, the Conservative and Reform groups, in spite of the important differences between them and their desire to maintain Jewish unity—the slogan which has kept them virtually silent and inactive for three decades—scored an important victory when the Congress voted to recognize the legitimacy of religious pluralism in all Zionist educational activities throughout the world. However, steps are already being taken by the Israel bureaucracy to nullify that resolution.

Light on different aspects of this difficult and obscure situation is shed from various points of view by four papers in this current issue of JUDAISM on the spiritual life in the land of Israel today.

Though it is widely known that, in Israel, the religious Establishment is Orthodox, the term covers a spectrum of positions and applies primarily to two principal tendencies which are often opposed to one another. *Shlomo Deshen* traces their background and development in “Two Trends in Israeli Orthodoxy,” while, with frankness and vigor, *Stanley Rabinowitz* explores the rising confrontation in the area of religion and the state in “Piety and Politics: Religion in Israel.” In this review-essay, he discusses two recent, full-volume treatments of this explosive issue.

That Zionism and the State of Israel represent something new in the Jewish historical experience cannot be denied. But what is their relationship to the Jewish past? Is Zionism a break with Jewish tradition or a modern reincarnation? The question is by no means purely academic. From it flow important practical consequences for the future of Jewish life, both in Israel and in the Diaspora.

In his paper, “The Jewish State and Jewish History: Contradiction or Continuation?” *Evyatar Friesel* lays bare the dynamics of Jewish survival during the past three hundred years. He indicates the impact on Jewish society of the surrounding cultural and political milieu in every period of Jewish history. The three driving forces that united to create the Zionist movement are set forth. The author then concludes that Zionism represents the latest stage in the process of interaction between Jews and general society. Finally, he points out important elements in the un-

finished agenda confronting Jews and Judaism in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

One of the clichés of modern Jewish life is that Hayyim Nahman Bialik is “the great national poet” of rebirth and the prophet of the new State of Israel. But after he occupied a unique place in the hearts of his people during his lifetime, the inevitable reaction set in and critical voices were heard, seeking to relegate him to a lower status as against some of his contemporaries and successors. Indeed, even the genuine poetic quality of his work was challenged by some critics.

In her paper, “Exploring the Inner Bialik,” *Nili Wachtel* discusses some modern efforts to penetrate to “the real Bialik,” and arrives at her own interpretation. She finds a basic unity in his poetic work, both when he writes as an individual and as the voice of his people in travail and rebirth.

What Happened at Sinai?

The inexhaustible riches of the Bible amply justify the rabbinic comment that “the Torah may be interpreted in forty-nine different ways.” The tragic incident of the defection of the people of Israel, with the worship of the Golden Calf, brought about the imminent threat of their destruction at the hands of God.

A group of critics, in their minute examination of the account of Exodus 32, have been led to divide the narrative into several distinct sources. This atomization of the Biblical text, *Nahum Waldman* feels, is unnecessary. In his paper, “The Breaking of the Tablets,” he offers an interpretation of this event which preserves its unitary character and gives it an added dimension of depth.

Maimonides as a Philosopher

A strong revival of interest in Maimonides has recently made itself felt. Within the past few years, translations of many of his major and minor works have appeared and various studies of his life and thought have been published.

Basic to the great medieval philosopher and legist has been his dedication to the Jewish religious and halakhic tradition, on the one hand, and to the general philosophic outlook current in his day on the other, both of which he sought to synthesize in his world-view. Such a synthesis has never been easy to achieve, neither then nor now. Consequently, some scholars have insisted that, basically, Maimonides gave his loyalty to one or the other of the two poles—either he was a philosopher using the language of traditional religion, or he was a defender of religion utilizing the vocabulary of philosophy.

In his paper, “The Philosophical Character of Maimonides’ *Guide*—A Critique of Strauss’ Interpretation,” *Joseph A. Buijs* maintains that Maimonides has an authentic claim to being a philosopher. Hence his

work has significance not only for those interested in Judaism but for all men and women dedicated to the quest for truth on the ultimate issues of existence.

Rosenzweig's View of Death

Decades after its original publication, *The Star of Redemption*, the life-work of the German-Jewish thinker, Franz Rosenzweig, appeared in an English translation, thus making his thought accessible to English readers. One highly important facet in the life and work of this heroic and creative Jewish teacher is explored in *Michael D. Oppenheim's* study, "Death and Man's Fear of Death in Franz Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption*." The writer presents a sympathetic analysis of Rosenzweig's wrestling with the ultimate mystery of existence, to which he was particularly sensitive during his short, illness-scarred life.

The Groundwork for the Dreyfus Affair.

Pronounce the phrase "the Dreyfus Affair" and it conjures up a vision of the French-Jewish army officer at the end of the nineteenth century who, on perjured testimony and false documents, was convicted of being a traitor, was driven from the army and sentenced to Devil's Island, until a belated pardon was issued to him.

Frederick Busi, whose paper, "The Dreyfus Case: An Affair Without End," appeared in *JUDAISM*, (Winter 1976), calls attention to a hitherto unrecognized aspect of the case in another article called "The First Dreyfus Affair." In the charged and poisonous atmosphere of the Third Republic in France during the last two decades of the last century, the Jewish family name "Dreyfus," referring to different individuals, came up time and again in the press and served as a butt for ridicule and hostility. Thus, the groundwork for this most celebrated anti-Semitic case of modern times was laid long before Alfred Dreyfus was brought up on charges of treachery before a military tribunal.

The Cross as a Literary Image

It is a striking fact that several influential writers and artists of our day, whose careers have been deeply affected by the Holocaust, have been attracted by the Crucifixion image and have used it in their work.

In his paper, "On Crucifying the Jews," *Michael Brown* examines this phenomenon and seeks to explain the source, as well as the limitations affecting the use by Jewish artists of this central myth of the Christian faith.

R.G.

I Believe

MOSES CYRUS WEILER*

Translated by David Polish

THE HOLY DAY SEASON FROM ROSH HA-Shanah, Shabbat Shuvah and Yom Kippur, until Sukkot, Sh'mini Azeret, and Simhat Torah—constitutes a complete cycle. For one who stands aside and is insensitive to Judaism, it would appear contradictory that sorrow and joy are mingled in these holidays, that joy and somberness are joined. But that is Judaism. For generations, every joy among us is marked with sorrow, and, to the contrary, joy is a corrective for sorrow. We read some weeks ago from the portion, *Nitzavim*:

Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. It is not in the heavens, that you should say, "Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?" Neither is it beyond the seas, that you should say, "Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?" No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it (Deuteronomy 30:1).

Rashi correctly interprets the words, "it is near to you" as follows: "The Torah is given to you in writing and orally," that is to say, that Judaism as a world view does not evade reality; it is thoroughly realistic. Therefore, in addition to prayers which have profound universal, religious and moral value, the Mahzor for Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur also added the prayer, *Unetaneh Tokef*, which evokes the fate of every one of us. The words,

Who will live and who will die, who in the fulness of his time and who prematurely, who by water, who by fire, who by sword, who by a wild beast, who by famine, who by thirst, who by storm, who by plague, who by strangling, who by stoning . . .

are not mere words, but part of bitter reality.

Concerning the Holy Days it is said that even Yom Kippur, despite its five afflictions, is the Sabbath of Sabbaths. The Mahzor appropriately uses such expressions as, "Joy to Your land and rejoicing to Your city," or "The righteous will see and rejoice, and the pious ones shall rejoice with sing-

* A *Dvar Torah* preceding the Yizkor prayers at Congregation *Mevakshei Derekh* in Jerusalem, Yom Kippur, 1976.

ing.” However, the tradition has placed the *Yizkor* (Memorial) Prayer at the very center of the worship. I believe that no other people has such a shattering prayer. The *Yizkor* is recited not only on Yom Kippur, but also during the national historical and nature holidays; on the seventh day of Pesah, on Shavuot and on the last day of Sukkot, of which it is said, “You shall rejoice in your festival and you shall only be joyous” (Deuteronomy 16: 14–15). Sh’mini Azeret, like Sukkot, is also called “the time of our rejoicing.”

In addressing myself to the apparent contradiction, I shall turn to the Oral Torah. In Tractate Brakhot (Chapter 5, Mishnah 1) it is said, “One rises for prayer only in a serious attitude.” The Gemara asks, “How do we know this?” Among other matters, the Amoraim adduce proof from the verse in the Book of Psalms, “Serve God in fear and rejoice with trembling” (Psalm 2:11). The Gemara pursues the question: “What is the meaning of rejoice with trembling?” The answer is “Even where there is rejoicing, there must be trembling.” This means that a person must not indulge in unbridled and boundless joy. On the same page of the Gemara we are told of two illustrious Amoraim, Mar the son of Rabina, and Rav Ashi, who married off their sons, and each of the fathers noted that the scholars who were guests were overly hilarious. Therefore, they brought in a precious goblet and shattered it, thus causing the scholars to become subdued. The Tosafists, who lived in the period of the Crusades, commented, “On the basis of this incident, it has become customary to break a glass at a wedding.” Since then the custom has become hallowed among the Jewish people, so that on a person’s happiest day, a glass is broken under the *huppah* (marriage canopy). During the seventeenth century there was another addition: if, may it not befall us, a parent dies before a wedding, the *El Maleh Rahamim* is recited under the *huppah*. Thus we learn that, among the Jewish people, joy encompasses sorrow like a canopy.

In our own time, even those of our brethren who hesitate to introduce changes in the liturgy, have acquiesced to a three-fold *Yizkor*. Since the creation of the State of Israel, we have added to the existing *Yizkor* which pertains to the individual and to the family, a *Yizkor* for the *Shoah*, commemorating the destruction of six million Jews, and a *Yizkor* for the thousands of the casualties from Israel’s Defense Forces who have fallen in Israel’s ranks.

However, when we recite the *Yizkor* prayer, the issue of faith takes precedence. Where can a person find the strength to believe under such difficult conditions? This question is asked especially by those for whom things are not going well and who feel that God is pursuing them. Even in lives that are more or less in order, great suffering comes to those who were healthy and mentally alert in the company of others, and who suddenly turn into vegetables and become burdens to themselves and their families. The lifting of their spirit under such conditions is excessively difficult; members of the family suffer and question greatly, but

there is no single response for the suffering and the absurdity. I know survivors of the *Shoah* who, despite their terrible and awful suffering, have become converted from full-fledged heretics to pious people and, conversely, I have met people who broke away from their belief. They argue: If God could stand aside while a million and a quarter children who had not yet sinned were brutally slaughtered, they can have nothing in common with Him. I have met parents, saved from the *Shoah*, who lost everything and managed somehow to begin anew, to re-establish their lives after the war—and then in the Yom Kippur War were bereft of an only son! I know a religious family whose father I had happened to meet in a remote corner of East Africa six months before the outbreak of the Second World War, when I had flown there to help ransom captives. The mother was a co-worker, and their only son, a student at a yeshivah, fell on the first day of the Yom Kippur War and was missing for a long time. As a consequence, the father became even more religious, while the mother could not become reconciled and her piety became flawed. What both positions hold in common is the question directed to me: *Do I still believe?*

I will permit myself to reveal a measure of my inner feelings. Even one of my sons has asked me where I find the strength to continue to believe. He argues that it is conceivable that after our son, Adam, was killed, I could continue to believe, but after the second son, Gideon, had fallen, the question presents itself in all of its intensity. My response, as to whence my faith flows, comes from Job, our literature's symbol of terrible suffering. Despite all the suffering, *Iyov* (Job) did not turn into (God's) *oyev* (enemy). In Tractate Baba Batra (Folio 16) there are two columns dealing with the principles in the story of Job. The Gemara says that even though Job wanted to "overturn the platter," (Rashi says that this means to uproot all reverence, since he reviled and abused) nevertheless, "*Iyov* did not turn into an *oyev*." In Job 13:15, it is said, "Even if He should slay me, I will not (אֲבַיֵּם) trust in Him, but I will argue my ways before Him."

The obvious translation of this verse is in accordance with the actual text: "Even if God should destroy me, nevertheless, I will not hope in Him, but instead will continue to insist on my righteousness and to argue that I am innocent." But the oral rendition of the text is "I will trust in (אֲבַיֵּם) Him." This has been accepted by our People as, "Even if God should destroy me, I will still wait expectantly for Him, but despite this I will continue to argue with Him concerning my righteousness."

Our scholars dealt with this matter in Tractate Sotah, Chapter 5, Mishnah 5. They wished to clarify whether Job served God through love or from a lower level, fear. To make their point, the Tannaim adduce proofs from verses in the Book of Job itself, and so it is said: "Joshua ben Horkanos teaches that Job served God only from love, as it is said, 'Even if He slays me I shall *not* wait.'"

The Mishnah continues, "Do I or do I not look to Him expectantly? The meaning is, 'until I die I shall not abandon my innocence'" (Job 27:5);

hence, he acted out of love. But, in the same Mishnah, there is also the opinion of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai who argues that Job served God out of fear, since, at the beginning of the book there is the description, “A whole-hearted and *upright* man, *fearing* God and departing from evil” (Job 1:8). But the accepted opinion is that Job acted out of love, as is indicated toward the end of the text. In the Gemara (Sotah 31, toward the end), the debate is summarized by Rabbi Simeon ben Elazar, “He who acts out of love is greater than he who acts out of fear.” It is interesting that Job’s fear is revealed at the beginning of the book where the period of his good fortune and wealth is mentioned. Only after his terrible suffering comes his service through love. Man is tested by his faith, not when everything goes satisfactorily, but by his conduct in most difficult times. The basis of both love and fear is the knowledge of God’s nearness which a person cannot escape. The Psalmist says, “Where shall I go from Your spirit and where shall I flee from Your presence?” (Psalm 139:7). According to this verse, it is impossible for a person to hide from God to evade His spirit, to flee from Him.

It was in this way that Israel’s great poets of the Middle Ages went. In “The Crown of Royalty” which some congregations read on Yom Kippur, Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021–1069) says:

My God, if my sin is too great to bear, what will You do to Your great name?
 If I cannot hope for Your mercy, who else but You will have mercy on me?
 Therefore, even if You should kill me, I will still wait for You.
 If You should seek out my sin, I will flee from You to You and will find
 refuge for Your wrath in Your shadow.
 I will cling to the very edge of Your mercy until You have pity on me
 And I will not let You go until You bless me.

In Ibn Gabirol, the relevant portion of Job appears in the form of a dialogue between God and man, and in a positive fashion. “Therefore, if You kill me I will still hope in You.” But he adds what is within us in times of great crisis, “I will flee from You to You.” There are times when a person wants to flee from God. But, in the course of flight, he flees from God to Him, because the alternative is total chaos, the abyss.

The poet, Emanuel of Rome (1230–1270), uses the same imagery as his predecessor, Ibn Gabirol:

If You slay me, God, I will hope in You
 I will flee for help from You to You.
 I will take cover in the wings of Your love on a day of great trouble,
 And from Your wrath I will flee to Your shadow.
 I will have trust on the day of darkness and gloom of Your wrath
 In light by the glow of Your salvation and the candle of Your light.
 My heart is with the hearts of Your people,
 They converse with You on the day of Your strength.

The decisive expression in this verse is: "I flee for help from You to You."

In *Sefer Hasidim* (by Rabbi Judah the Hasid and the circle of his disciples, the Hasidei Ashkenaz of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), it is said,

If afflictions come upon a person, he should reflect on how the horsemen do, going into battle to show their heroism when there is no escape from the sword, for they are ashamed to flee. They are wounded and slain only because of shame, and they receive no reward from their masters for dying in battle. Thus, even if He slay me, in Him will I hope, and I will worship Him without expectation of reward.¹

The advocate of the people of Israel, Levi Yizhak of Berditchev, sang the "*Dudele*," a song addressed to God, which expresses the same idea. In our time, also, the Yiddish writer, Isaac Bashevis Singer, in his story "I Do Not Trust in Man," which is derived from the portion of the Zohar (*Vayakhel*), which is read on Shabbat morning in the prayer for removing the Torah, tells of a rabbi in a Lithuanian village before the *Shoah*, when life was still in order. The community abused him and was full of criticism against his wife and daughter. When the rabbi decided to go to another town, damaging gossip preceded him to his position. Standing at the threshold of despair, he cried out in Yiddish, "Master of the Universe, how can I flee You?" As a *y'reh shamayim*, a fearer of heaven, I am sure that he did not flee, and if he did flee, it was from God to Him.

We, too, want "to overturn the platter" when we find ourselves in a serious crisis. We want to reject everything, to rebel against divine providence, to spoil and wreck all the accepted norms. We, too, would want to flee from God when our world turns dark. But, in such a time of crisis, when we feel "the hiding of the Face" and, in the words of Martin Buber, "the Eclipse of God," we gain strength. Our faith increases and under no condition do we want to live without God. This gives us the power to examine our tragedy, to interpret it, and to surmount it. In such a critical time, we say: Perhaps the ways of God are unknown to us, God has deserted us for a while, but we cannot say that God does not exist. We will not do the work of Satan and the *Sitra Achara* (the "Other Side"). Through our faith, in the words of Ibn Gabirol and Emanuel of Rome, we flee from Him to Him.

That is how I understand that man of the spirit who dwells in our midst in Jerusalem, whose motto is "Your walls are before me always" (Isaiah 49:16). I refer to Professor André Neher, a faithful and devoted Jew, a keeper of the *mizvot*, whose Judaism, together with all this, embraces the world. As a native of France, he experienced "out of his own flesh" the persecution of the Jews during the Second World War. Neher protested with profound penetration against God's hiding his Face, from

1. *Sefer Hasidim*, Vistinetsky edition (Berlin: *Makizei Nirdamim*, 1891), par. 987.

the Biblical silence to Auschwitz and Hiroshima. Concerning his book, *The Hiding of the Face*, he says,

In my book I attempted to summarize how one hears the voice of God, not only from the events of the days, but also from the events of the nights, when the lights are eclipsed. God is silent, so to speak, and He does not respond to His seekers in times of the hiding of the Face and the silencing of prophecy, in times of terrible hatred.

It is worth ending with the following sentences from Neher's book:

The theological challenge before which the Jewish person, the hero of Auschwitz, stands, is not to merely believe, to merely pray, to merely hope, but, rather, to create the faith, the prayer and the hope as a flowing and gushing spring, out of the continuous choice between absurdity and meaning. Only against this background, based on the daily experience, in their time, of Israel's prophets, can man, contemporary man, perhaps arrive at experiences of the Hidden Face and Silence. It is this category of experiences which Abraham at the Altar of Binding and Job in his suffering, underwent—experiences by which the "Martyrs of Silence" (the idiom of Uri Zvi Greenberg) were tested in Auschwitz, and to express in confronting the No of the Divine Ego, the Yes of the human ego, "*Hineni*, here I am."

Two Trends in Israeli Orthodoxy

SHLOMO DESHEN

I The Diaspora Background

ISRAEL IS MAINLY A SOCIETY OF IMMIGRANTS, and any discussion of religion at the grassroots level of the various social groups leads us to the recent past of those groups in their countries of origin, where the present religious and cultural patterns emerged. I am concerned here with two of the major trends in Israeli Judaism, modern-Orthodoxy and Orthodoxy, both of which have their roots in historical European Jewry.

Life for Jews in traditional Europe entailed many socio-cultural peculiarities—such as making a living along certain lines, having the choice of area of residence and of friends delimited, using a particular language, having recourse to particular legal institutions, as well as many others. Thus, quite beside their actual religious practices, Jews were engaged in many special social and cultural ones which, through the centuries, became intertwined with the religion, and even gained the legitimization and actual sanction of religion.

That pattern has changed since the late 18th century. The pre-modern type of state evolved into mass societies whose tolerance for the legal and cultural autonomy of groups and strata was minimal. In the course of these radical social changes, the status of members of Jewish communities tended to be transformed from that of “Jews” to that of “citizens of the Jewish faith.” This transition implied the granting of universal rights while, at the same time, annulling ancient rights pertaining to membership in the particular stratum of Jews. These ancient rights were, however, intertwined with the Jewish religion and Jewish social practices. To the Jews, therefore, the societies undergoing change posed acute and profound dilemmas, and, as the ghetto walls began to crumble, they faced the predicament of reorganizing their lives in society at large. This process of political and social modernization started first in Western Europe in the late 18th century, gradually moved to Central Europe and, much later, to some of the Muslim countries. However, the process did not develop consistently and radically, as later events, culminating in the German massacre of European Jewry, tragically attest. Powerful social forces from both sides of the old ghetto walls—the Jewish and the Gentile—operated to obstruct the total dismantling of the barriers, but

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the social, cultural, and religious problems inherent in the terms of the Emancipation faced all Jews.

The various attempts at solving these problems constitute the core of the internal Jewish conflicts of modern times, and, in order to understand the current Israeli religio-cultural situation, we must follow the main trends of these clashing Diaspora responses that have been carried over into latter-day Israel. They all grapple with the root problem of outlining Jewish positions on assimilation to Gentile society, on the one hand, and adherence to traditional Jewish life, on the other. While the poles are mutually exclusive, and some circles opted for a stand at one or the other, many chose to make for themselves an ideological and existential niche at some place along the continuum between the extremes. Some of these programs were carried over, more or less intact, by immigrants to the new society. I outline two of them.

(1) Modern-Orthodoxy sought to divorce religious practices from other cultural elements of traditional Judaism. Religion was to be retained while many of the other elements, such as the restricted range of occupations, or the use of the Yiddish language, were to be discarded. Because of the age-old minimal differentiation of religion from other elements of culture, the task which modern-Orthodoxy set itself was highly problematic. Its protagonists moved on the continuum, out of the ghetto toward modernity, as far as religion, in the strictest sense of the word (barren of cultural appendages) permitted. They remained punctilious in their adherence to the practices of traditional religion as strictly defined, while, at the same time, they accepted the dissolution of such ancient institutions as the autonomous judicial, political, and educational organs of the corporate communities. Upon immigrating during the 1920s and '30s, the modern-Orthodox in Israel, in their relationship with the nationalist majority and its institutions, conducted the same kind of relationship that they had maintained in the past with the Gentile environment. Thus, the modern-Orthodox strove for, and welcomed, the nationalist State. As religious nationalists, they participated actively in the roles and tasks of society, while, at the same time, remaining loyal to traditional religion.

One innovation of modern-Orthodoxy is especially noteworthy in the context of the argument that I develop in this paper. In traditional Judaism the study of *Torah* ("the divine teaching"), in the form of Talmudic literature, was a major act of religious merit. At the same time, it was also a standard cultural and leisure activity and, thus, had important ramifications in the areas of occupation, education, and social life. In modern-Orthodoxy, the worth which came to be attached to advanced technical training and to non-Jewish culture generally led to a de-emphasis of the study of *Torah* as an act of value in itself. People engaged less in *Torah* study and devoted more time to other cultural activities. This shift has never attained clear religious legitimization in modern-Orthodox thought and has remained, therefore, a source of religious

malaise that we shall come across again in our discussion. Modern-Orthodoxy as a way of life also entails many problems in religious practice. I cite one broad range of them. Traditionally, Jews did not normally engage in such occupations as army and police service, farming, heavy industry, or the maintenance of essential public services (for instance, the provision of water and power). Inherent in all of these activities are clashes with the norms of the traditional way of life and of religion specifically, as, for example, in matters of Sabbath observance. But religious nationalists, because of their commitment to the general society, do not want to shun these activities. Ways are sought, therefore, to adapt the practice of these occupations to religious norms, and rabbinical figures associated with the movement grapple with the problems, though many remain intractable.

(2) In Orthodoxy, another major Diaspora response to 19th century problems, the traditional way of life gains valuation as a total system for its own sake. As distinct from modern-Orthodoxy, Orthodoxy does not seek to isolate the specifically religious elements in tradition. It is a conservative movement in the full sense of the word and, at the same time, a novel phenomenon in Judaism. In the traditional past, Judaism had been characterized by a precarious balance between this-worldliness and other-worldliness. At the side of the basic spiritual life orientation, there was also a valuation, albeit qualified and delimited, of achievement in material matters and in secular scholarship. By the late 19th century, as a result of two major Jewish religious movements in Eastern Europe, *Hasidism* and *Musar*, the balance had tilted in favor of spirituality and other-worldliness.

One of the expressions of the shift in the world view of Orthodoxy was in the area of learning. In the traditional past, East European learning in *Torah* had held a standing roughly analogous to that of classical humanistic learning—a requisite for a self-respecting Jew—and, because of its religious importance, was universally practised at various levels. There existed a two-stage degree system operated by senior scholars (in a fashion again analogous to contemporary university honors). Specific religious roles, such as those of community rabbis, were esteemed and called for ranking scholars.

In latter-day Orthodoxy, however, learning in *Torah* attained a more elevated, quasi-mystical standing. The theme of learning for its own sake, without concern for degree of professional reward, not to mention actual ulterior material and social motives, was emphasized with unprecedented force. In the context of Eastern European Jewish society, where traditional bonds were wearing thin, learning in *Torah* came to be conceived of among the Orthodox as an insurance that secured Judaism against erosion. Adults proceeded with their studies, practically unsupported, while raising their growing families, and self-privation among the Orthodox became a familiar feature. A new variant-type of the Jewish religious ideal

character, in the form of the unworldly and ascetic *Torah* scholar, relatively oblivious to professional and realistic elements in his study, thus became more and more common among them during the last century. At the same time, the modern-Orthodox who, because of their increasing involvement in the general economy and culture reduced their study of *Torah*, as was previously noted, usually remained apologetic and on the defensive on that score vis-à-vis the Orthodox.

II *The Israeli Background*

While, in Israel, the names and labels of the various religious trends change constantly, the essential phenomena remain stable. Though Jewish movements of European and, also, of Oriental origin emerged, the two which I have outlined took the form of social movements *cum* political parties. The Orthodox position was represented by *Agudat Yisrael* and the modern-Orthodox by *Mafdal*.

Numerically, one can obtain a rough idea of the relative proportions of the religious patterns from general election returns. *Agudat Yisrael* usually wins about 5% of the general Jewish vote, a figure which more or less represents the actual percentage of the Orthodox in the population; *Mafdal* usually gets about 10%, probably the optimal figure for Israeli modern-Orthodoxy.¹ The smallness of the figure should not lead us to underestimate the intrinsic importance of the religious trends which they represent. Orthodoxy is recognized as carrying the weight of legitimate Jewish tradition and, as will become clearer below, this gives to views emanating from Orthodox circles an importance disproportionate to their numbers.

In contrast to the immigrant background of the "secular" and *Mafdal* parties, the core of *Agudat Yisrael* lies in the ancient traditional Jerusalem community that preceded the nationalist immigration. During the pre-State period, both *Agudat Yisrael* and *Mafdal* were rather weak parties: *Agudat Yisrael* because of its lack of involvement and its self-insulation from the nationalist immigrant movements that exerted themselves in laying the foundations of the embryonic state, *Mafdal* because of its comparatively late appearance on the scene, during the 1920s. The social life and culture of the country, due to the revolutionary element in Zionism, had an anti-Orthodox and anti-traditional atmosphere. Intolerance and impatience toward the observant were in the air. Yet, hand in hand, ever since the late 1920s, there developed a political partnership

1. *Mafdal* draws a great deal of its support from the Oriental electorate, which represents a completely different religious pattern from that of the modern-Orthodox. On the other hand, some of the modern-Orthodox support nonreligious parties. Since the latter are, however, much fewer than the Orientals who vote for *Mafdal*, the 10% figure that I have given tends, if anything, to be exaggerated.

between *Mafdal* and most of the other major parties, particularly Labor, which have a good deal in common as nationalist parties.

Labor was not averse to religion in modern-Orthodox form, and this had one particularly important ramification: the institutionalization of the Chief Rabbinate which later, during the State period, was to become quite important. In the 1920s and '30s, however, though the newly created office was manned by a spiritual leader of great stature, Rabbi Kook, it was weak and ineffectual and was accepted only by the small *Mafdal* circles that were beginning to strike roots in the country. It was ignored by the secular and was vociferously opposed by the Orthodox.

This opposition was particularly notable on the following issue. Rabbi Kook and the *Mafdal* circles tried repeatedly to establish a seminary, like those already existing in the Diaspora, for the training of rabbis with a modern outlook. Their efforts were thwarted, however, by *Agudat Yisrael* leaders, who fought for the supremacy of their conception of the rabbinical role. The issue has remained alive. When, later, in the 1950s, the religious Bar-Ilan University was founded by *Mafdal* adherents, the Orthodox again ensured that, paradoxically, the university should not establish a school of rabbinics. In *Agudat Yisrael*, by contrast to *Mafdal*, rabbis have crucial institutionalized powers as members of the party's Council of Torah Sages, which has the decisive voice in general policy and specific decisions. Not infrequently, the council figures as a rival to the Chief Rabbinate. The views and decisions of its rabbis also often echo in *Mafdal* circles, and, though not always accepted, they cause uneasiness and soul-searching.

Agudat Yisrael's greater influence is not rooted in any substantial socio-economic or political power. To a small extent, it derives from the capability of the Orthodox circles to stir up emotional demonstrations of various kinds (sometimes peppered with a little violence). More fundamentally, however, it lies in *Mafdal's* basic lack of self-confidence, or "weakness of nerve," in the matter of religious legitimacy. The *Mafdal* failure on the issue of rabbinical training has, of course, perpetuated the problem and, until very recently, religious nationalist circles have, by and large, not trained their own leaders. *Mafdal*-associated rabbis, more often than not, get their training and religio-social outlook from Orthodox scholars in *talmudei torah*, *yeshivot*, and *kolelim*, rabbinical seminaries of varying levels oriented toward *Agudat Yisrael* circles. Some of the most senior of these scholars are members of the Council of Torah Sages. Naturally, the graduates of the *yeshivot* often look back over their shoulders when deciding controversial matters.

The social life of *Mafdal* people, during the 1930s and the '40s, had a good deal in common with that of other nationalists. They intermingled as neighbors in many localities throughout the country, particularly in the growing towns and in the larger villages that were beginning to lose their

rural character. Religious observance in these localities, insofar as it did not involve practices on which everyone agree, tended largely to be a matter for the individual. *Mafdal* circles, as such, were not very forceful, let alone successful, in pressing for standardized religious policies. In other localities, particularly in Jerusalem, which had large, concentrated communities of the Orthodox, the situation was different. Here the *Agudat Yisrael* circles struggled with the secular parties over the religious and cultural character of public life. Demonstrations, at times agitated, at times restrained, over such issues as the desecration of the Sabbath in public, the opening of modern schools, and the enfranchisement of women, were endemic.

In the sphere of educational activities, there were also notable differences between the various social circles. The nationalist ones developed a modern school system in which Biblical literature played an important, though far from major, role. The schools sought to provide a diversified, broad curriculum; in matters of religious practice, however, they inculcated indifference (and, sometimes, an actively anti-religious attitude). While basically all nationalist schools were structured similarly, *Mafdal* circles created a network of schools that differed on two counts: traditional studies were quantitatively more prominent (but, again, not predominant) and religious practice was actively taught and encouraged. *Agudat Yisrael* circles, by and large, carried on, and developed, the traditional schools (the *talmud torah*, *yeshivah* and *kolel*) with their paramount emphasis on Talmudic studies.

The rift between the educational patterns of the Orthodox sector and those of the modern-Orthodox is very deep, and has extensive ramifications. A detailed discussion of the *Agudat Yisrael* religious and educational pattern will lead us to an understanding of some of the crucial characteristics of Orthodox and modern-Orthodox religiosity.

III The Orthodox Trend

With the advances of secularism in Israel, as a result of the nationalist immigration during the first decade of the century, the traditional school system became ideologically buttressed by a new conservative ideology, causing it to be reactive to innovations. Thus, when schools everywhere were becoming sensitive to the need for technical training, *Agudat Yisrael* educators were reluctant to introduce changes in the traditional curriculum. And probably because of the social insulation of the *Agudat Yisrael* world, their youth accepted the limitations. Consequently, *Agudat Yisrael* circles were quite successful in perpetuating themselves through their school system. *Mafdal* circles, on the other hand, apparently withstood secularism less successfully during the 1930s and the '40s; many of their youth abandoned religious practices and joined the other nationalist circles. Since the mid-1940s, in the wake of two very dramatic events—the

German massacre of European Jewry and the attainment of Israeli independence—much of this has changed. While the more profound effects of the European massacre on Jewish religion and spirituality still remain to be explored, the following crucial development is clear.

At the end of World War II, the major remnants of European Jewish Orthodoxy were in eastern Hungary and in Rumania. In the past, most of this region had constituted one Jewish culture area, a bastion of Orthodoxy with a history of acute conflict with other trends in modern Judaism. When Hungarian Jews, who had been vociferously anti-Zionist, were driven to emigrate, many came to Israel where they joined both the old Jerusalem community and new religious communities (such as the Tel Aviv suburb of Bnei-Brak). Israeli Orthodoxy, thus, came to include a new and aggressively conservative element, people whose conservatism was compounded by the experience of seeing their communities shattered and who now strove to reconstruct them in emulation of the past.

The events in Europe also prompted many important Orthodox rabbis and Talmudic scholars to move to Israel and to establish numerous *yeshivot* and *kolelim*, institutions of advanced Talmudic learning, in various localities, including the new towns founded by the nationalists. The combination of a rabbinical immigrant leadership of ranking stature and of the Hungarian immigration stimulated much religious vitality. The new *yeshivot* flourished quantitatively and qualitatively, attracting increasing numbers of students, so that, contrary to all traditional practice, many *yeshivot* now perforce sometimes reject applicants.² These new Israeli *yeshivot* have become the world center of traditional Jewish learning, taking over from the Lithuanian and Polish ones which had filled this role before the war. They are looked up to by observant Jews from all over and even attract students from communities such as New York, that are, themselves, major centers of traditional learning. The *yeshivot* constitute the core of Orthodoxy, and their flourishing is one of the most crucial features of Israeli Judaism. Characteristically, the *yeshivot*, while maintaining high standards of Talmudic scholarship, teach in a completely traditional way, consciously shunning modern scholarship in the field.

The scholars of the *yeshivot* are concerned with religious problems in a manner similar to that of their 19th-century Lithuanian and Polish forebears. There is considerable productivity and publication on problems of ritual, custom, and law, both in the abstract and in the context of present-day technological and social contingencies. The work of ranking *yeshivah* scholars has relevance for Israeli society generally because the rabbinical courts, which exercise religious law (*halakhah*), have exclusive jurisdiction over marital affairs. The ultimate interpretation of religious law, while theoretically resting with the *Mafdal*-oriented Chief Rabbinate, resides, in fact, and to a very considerable extent, in the hands of eminent

2. In 1973, about 15,600 male adults and boys were reported studying in Orthodox *yeshivot*; of these, 5,400, who presumably have their own dependent families, in *kolelim*.

scholars of *yeshivah* circles. Members of the High Rabbinical Court pay attention to the informally expressed opinions of these scholars, despite their lack of formal authority. Though there are ancient historical precedents for this kind of mutual regard among rabbinical authorities, in Israel it is also nurtured by the disparity of legitimacy and self-assurance between Orthodox and modern-Orthodox interpreters of tradition.

In this context, it is notable that, in many different areas, the *yeshivah* scholars have a tendency to interpret halakhic requirements in increasingly strict and unequivocal terms. Consistent with this tendency is the new, occasional practice, common to all Israeli halakhic authorities, to substantiate their rulings by declaring them to be authoritative *da'at Torah* ("Torah Wisdom")—along a pattern reminiscent of Catholic pontifical *ex cathedra* pronouncements. Traditionally, halakhic rulings, even when handed down by most eminent authorities, would always have been foot-noted with the rational explication of pertinent legal considerations and, consequently, would have been open for discussion.

Abstract religious thought has traditionally not been consistently emphasized in Judaism; it is, therefore, not unusual that the productivity of *yeshivah* scholars in this area is comparatively poor, whereas the fair amount in the area of ethics is notable; a small number of new moralistic works appears constantly. The social scope of the works emanating from *yeshivah* circles is, however, largely restricted to Orthodox circles. The halakhic tracts, insofar as they are not juridical or specifically textual, mainly discuss matters which are of concern only to strictly observant people. The ethical works are even more restricted, focussing as they do on problems of the *yeshivah* student, and not on the mundane problems of the observant individual after the termination of his full-time studies.

In many ways, *yeshivah* circles constitute an enclosed, self-sufficient subculture. Terms such as "religious order" and "monasticism," while only grossly approximate, do point at some of their features. Characteristic is a feeling of corporateness and difference from other people and a powerful sense of superior religious status that sometimes expresses itself in actual haughtiness. This feeling evolved, as was noted, from the shift in 19th century Eastern European Judaism toward other-worldly spirituality. *Yeshivah* culture often nurtures the Yiddish language of traditional Europe. Though it is foreign to many students, they pick it up in the course of their studies, at least so that they can follow lectures. But even the common Hebrew speech of *yeshivah* students has many peculiar characteristics, both in vocabulary and in pronunciation, which derive from the Yiddish language, which is frequently used in scholarly and daily discourse, and from the Aramaic language of the Talmudic texts. *Yeshivah* students also dress almost uniformly—dark suit and hat, and white shirt, usually with a dark tie. This kind of attire, generally immaculate and formal, in the Israeli cultural and physical subtropical climate, makes the wearers a highly visible and self-conscious group.

The distinctiveness of *yeshivah* life also reaches into the sphere of marital and household activities. Due to the consistent traditional segregation of the sexes at all stages of socialization, marriages are formed through the equally traditional mode of matchmaking. Thus, ties are established, not only between Orthodox couples in Israel, but between people living in Israel and in Orthodox communities overseas as well. The strong hold which *yeshivah* life has on the students also molds the structure of the family. The wives are very often as keen as their husbands that the latter continue their studies indefinitely. Consequently, a pattern has developed whereby the wife is the main breadwinner through such work as elementary school teaching. At the same time, little family planning is practised, so that families grow very quickly. Because of the wife's occupation, the husband is, then, much involved in child care, probably more than in the traditional Jewish family. Since the students receive only very small stipends, the general standard and style of life in *yeshivah* circles is modest, sometimes virtually ascetic. Gradually, because of financial need and domestic pressures, most of the men are driven to terminate full-time and, eventually, also, part-time studies and to move into teaching or lower grade clerical work. Socially and culturally, however, they maintain many of their characteristics, and continue to revolve around the *yeshivot* and their spiritual leaders.

Agudat Yisrael circles also include a handful of people who, despite the drawback of not having received a higher secular education, have attained relatively high positions in the economy, as well as a trickle of American and Western immigrants of modern-Orthodox background (some of them in advanced professional positions), who, on arrival in Israel, have shifted their religious orientation. Though their numbers may not be very significant, what is more crucial is that these people also submit to the religious authority of the *yeshivot*.

The relative insulation of *yeshivah* circles from broad social concerns and cultural trends is fostered by two major factors: exemption from army service and the structure of *yeshivah* finances. *Yeshivah* students serve in the army only to a very limited extent, if at all. Heads of *yeshivot*, supported by the religious parties, have insisted on exemption for them, their feeling being that military service would expose the students to cultural and social influences which might eventually lead many to move away from *yeshivah* life. It is valid to assume that the present flowering of *yeshivot* in Israel may be linked to the military service exemption which their students can enjoy.³

This insulation is further reinforced by their financing, whose main source, generally, is the philanthropy of American and Western Or-

3. This assumption is based on my impression that Orthodox circles in Western countries, which otherwise have much in common with their Israeli counterparts, maintain comparatively few *yeshivot* and *kolelim* and provide for a much shorter *yeshivah* education. Their youth move quite soon either into commerce or into a profession.

thodoxy. Distance and the relative anonymity of the benefactors render the *yeshivot* rather independent in the management of their affairs, a fact which, most significantly, furthers a sense of separation from, as well as a self-sufficiency vis-à-vis, the immediate Israeli environment. While the Israeli government is also an important source of financial support, this fact is not complemented by actual controlling power, or even much influence, as exemption from military service shows. The support is granted only because of the political power of the religious parties that back the *yeshivot*, and the concessions do not stem from the government's conviction of the moral right of *yeshivah* circles to preferential treatment. As a result of this situation, *yeshivah* circles do not feel obligated to the government, except, perhaps, to the *Mafdal* party that sustains the concessions. *Mafdal*, however, is plagued by its fundamental lack of self-assurance and, far from controlling the *yeshivot*, is, in fact, much under their influence. The peculiarities of *yeshivah* financing and the minimal civic participation of latter-day *yeshivah* circles cultivate in them a tendency to aloofness and a lack of rapport with society. These characteristics, again, are rooted in the particular spiritual and other-worldly turn that Eastern European Jewish religiosity took in the 19th century.⁴

I have emphasized the importance of the new *yeshivah* circles in Israeli Orthodoxy, which are distinctive in having been formed by recent immigrants who are involved in the mainstream of the national economy. Characteristically, these are centered in the Tel Aviv area, the dynamic economic and social center of the population, and they are more consistently militant as conservatives than are their older Jerusalem counterparts. Many of the features of the Israeli rabbinate that have been pointed out by both modern-Orthodox and secular critics, particularly their limited concern with social and moral issues, as contrasted with their preoccupation with ritual and legal matters, can be traced to the rabbis' personal roots in the *yeshivah* world. The phenomena are only deceptively exotic; they lie on the main road of present-day Israeli Judaism.

IV *Modern-Orthodox Trend*

The reassertion of Orthodoxy is contemporaneous with comparable developments in the modern-Orthodox circles. In the past, *Mafdal* adherents had intermingled with non-observant Jews as neighbors and had educated their children in schools that were only marginally different. Since the late 1940s, however, a tendency has developed in *Mafdal* and *Agudat Yisrael* circles to draw together and to establish their own residential housing projects. Thus, at a time when the general population multi-

4. My very informal, comparative impressions of *yeshivah* circles in Israel and in Britain lead me to the conclusion that in Britain, where the *yeshivot* are in close rapport with their sources of munificence, relations with the community are generally much closer, and *yeshivah* circles are not as clearly delimited, culturally and socially, from other sectors of the community.

plied greatly, the observant population in many localities remained constant or decreased, while in a few others it increased to such an extent that these gained the characteristics of religious quarters.

Specific religious problems, rooted in Judaism, underwrite the preference of observant persons for living among people of their own kind. They would rather be among neighbors who, for instances, do not drive on the Sabbath, do not play the radio loudly or smoke in public on that day, and who do not dress immodestly. It is striking that the observant have become more sensitive in these matters. People who, during the 1930s and the '40s, lived in religiously mixed neighborhoods, are now actually moving to comparatively homogeneous localities, or, at least, to localities where there are large communities like themselves.

Another recent development, in the sphere of schooling, is a new network of *Mafdal*-oriented educational institutions that competes with the old ones of *Mafdal*. This new network comprises "secondary-school *yeshivot*" (boarding schools for the secondary grades) which, as the name implies, have much in common with the *Agudat Yisrael yeshivot* in matters of curriculum and religious atmosphere. These "secondary-school *yeshivot*" also offer a program of secular studies leading to matriculation. However, such studies are considered necessary only insofar as matriculation examinations require them, and the inculcation of culture and values is carried out exclusively through the religious program. Secular culture and studies are, thus, de-emphasized and largely denuded of value. Since the early 1950s, the "secondary-school *yeshivot*" have attracted ever-increasing numbers.⁵ At first, these were for boys only, but, in the 1960s, demand for parallel schooling for girls led to the establishment of similar institutions for them as well.⁶ The most recent trend in *Mafdal* education is the extension of the new *yeshivot* network to cater also for younger ages—boys aged 12 to 14. At the senior pole of the new *Mafdal* network, new "higher *yeshivot*" have been founded, and they attract some of the graduates of the "secondary-school *yeshivot*."

The new "higher *yeshivot*," have much in common with the traditional *yeshivot* of *Agudat Yisrael* circles, the major difference between the two being that the *Mafdal yeshivot* have an arrangement with the military authorities whereby the students serve in the army, but periodically, during their term of conscription, resume their *yeshivah* studies. This arrangement has significant ramifications in personal life styles. Pre-

5. The following figures convey an impression of the quantitative growth: in 1954 only 700 boys studied in secondary-school *yeshivot*; in 1963 the number was 3,453; and in 1973 it was 7,455. It should be noted that these figures isolate, to a certain extent, the factor of general population growth, because the bulk of immigration came before the period covered by these figures. Also, Oriental immigrants, who constitute the majority of immigrants in recent decades, are underrepresented in the new schools. These figures, therefore, indicate a true shift in modern-Orthodox educational patterns.

6. In the old *Mafdal* schooling system the sexes were usually not segregated.

sently, 1,200 students are reported studying in the *Mafdal*-oriented "higher *yeshivot*."

Concurrently with the rise of this new, comparatively traditional, educational network, the older *Mafdal* educational system, particularly at the secondary-school level, has stagnated. The old system laid more stress on the secular curriculum and the general educational emphasis was also more secular. There has now developed a natural process of selection whereby, to put it very generally, academically superior students study in the new network, and inferior ones in the old network.⁷ This trend in education among the modern-Orthodox is of major import, since it implies a consistent move in Israeli modern-Orthodoxy toward the religious and cultural patterns of Orthodoxy. The educational shift is linked with the failure of the old *Mafdal* schooling system of the 1930s and the '40s, relative to the *Agudat Yisrael*, to produce a religiously observant type of graduate, similar to the parent generation, for which it had aimed. It is expressive of a reassessment of *Mafdal* educational values and, more profoundly, to use Gilbert Murray's phrase, of the modern-Orthodox "failure of nerve."

The graduates of the new *Mafdal* education, and those whom it has influenced, evince distinctive religious and cultural characteristics. They are self-assured, confident, perhaps even self-satisfied, and their morale is high. From this point of view they have much in common with the Orthodox *yeshivah* circles, and are distinct from their elders and other contemporaries. While from the point of view of religious practice the younger *Mafdal* adherents are similar to, or slightly more observant than, their parents, their conception of the role of religion in society is radically different. They have coalesced politically as a vigorous faction (known as the "Young *Mafdal*") within the *Mafdal* party and believe that religious (halakhic) considerations should be consistently explicated and be made to penetrate all areas of public life, such as foreign policy, labour relations or social welfare, most of which are presently governed by purely pragmatic or secular considerations. Their aim is to have a specifically religious foreign policy, religious labor relations, a religious social-welfare policy, etc., and they strive to realize these policies in practice. Yet, despite their extreme religious orientation in public affairs, people of the Young *Mafdal* circles maintain a personal Jewish life of modern-Orthodox shade: religion plays a delimited role, and it does not dictate as many aspects in their daily life as among *Agudat Yisrael*-oriented *yeshivah* circles. Personally, the Young *Mafdal* are well attuned to non-observant persons and modern-style secular living, but have, at the same time, moved far in the

7. The new institutions, because of the comparatively large number of candidates, are able, through entrance examinations, to select their students. Secondary schools of the older type are usually reduced to accepting most applicants. There is also a marked tendency for students of European background to study in the new network and for students of Oriental background to study in the old network.

direction of Orthodoxy as a public position. They maintain closer ties with rabbinical figures than do their elders, and they take more serious note of rabbinical views in their politics, in a manner reminiscent of the *Agudat Yisrael* attitude to the Council of Torah Sages. The position of the Young *Mafdal* circles in matters both of relations between state and religion and of external affairs are intransigent and "hawkish," constituting the extreme right-wing in the current political spectrum. On territorial issues, their position is far more uncompromising than that of most leading rabbis of Orthodox circles, as well as that of their elders. While extremist positions, in external and internal affairs, such as those of the Young *Mafdal*, can be rooted in secular considerations of *realpolitik*, the Young *Mafdal*'s views are, in fact, religiously motivated. Impassionedly propagated through reference to a wealth of religious ideas, such as divine promise, the holiness of the land, etc., and through various specific Biblical associations with particular localities, these views are an essential element of the new pattern of Israeli Judaism evolved by the Young *Mafdal*. Remarkable, indeed, is the contrast with the views of most rabbinical authorities who, while cognizant of the symbols that fire the Young *Mafdal*, interpret them in more ambiguous terms.

The Young *Mafdal* circles, as a religious phenomenon, are a development within Israeli Judaism that awaits full elucidation. Tentatively, I suggest the following interpretation: The Young *Mafdal* positions, consisting in the explication of religious requirements for new areas of life (and, within this context, their intransigent stand in external and internal affairs), are responses to the old modern-Orthodox malaise—the feeling of religious shortcoming and questionable legitimacy. While the Young *Mafdal* positions are distinctly Orthodox and conservative in character, they were never formulated by the Orthodox themselves. These positions should be seen in conjunction with the adoption of various cultural and educational traits from Orthodox circles, such as are focused in the new *Mafdal* educational system and the new residential pattern. The Young *Mafdal* people are, however, far from accepting the Orthodox personal life styles of *yeshivah* circles and, in many ways, they oppose them. The phenomenon should be seen in terms of a response to the old fundamental problem of Jewish modern-Orthodoxy. It constitutes, for the first time in many decades, an offensive position vis-à-vis Orthodoxy in that it is a combination of modern life styles on the plane of daily living and of a radically Orthodox ideology in public affairs. This combination can stake a claim for legitimacy that has heretofore eluded the ideologists of modern-Orthodoxy.

*Piety and Politics: Religion in Israel**

STANLEY RABINOWITZ

THOUGH FRIENDLY TO THEODORE HERZL, THE Chief Rabbi of France, Zadoc Kahn (1839-1905) remained hostile to Zionism because of his dilemma: he could not conceive of a Jewish state without halakhah as its basic law, yet he felt that, governed by halakhah, such a state could not function. He reconciled his dilemma by rejecting Zionism. The State is now in its 30th year, and so is the dilemma of reconciling halakhah with the daily needs of a modern society.

Long after Israel reaches an agreement with her neighbors, and even after Israel achieves her hitherto elusive goal of secure and recognized boundaries, the challenge of resolving her religious controversies will remain. According to one interpretation of Jewish tradition, it is heresy to re-establish *Am Yisrael in Erez Yisrael* in advance of the appearance of the Messiah, or, at least, the intimation of his arrival; and, to a more accommodating interpretation of that same tradition, the turn of world events has made of Israel, at most, a necessary heresy and, at least, the beginning of the messianic era. While the "secular" Israeli denies that Israel is a heresy, the ultra-Orthodox Neturei Karta denies that it is a necessity. No one, however, will deny the conflict between the Jewish religion and the Jewish state. The term "Jewish State" itself may well be its source.

Two recently-published works analyze this complex and tragic problem in an instructive and stimulating manner. Both are well indexed and annotated, both are absorbing reading, and both are basic books on a basic subject. Neither is didactic.

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While both bring impeccable credentials to the enterprise, Abramov writes as a participant, Schiff as an observer. Schiff focuses on the religious parties, Mizrachi and Hapoel Hamizrachi (Mafdal) which he de-

* This paper is a review essay of the following books:

Perpetual Dilemma: Jewish Religion in the Jewish State, By S. Zalman Abramov. Fairleigh Dickinson Press/World Union for Progressive Judaism, Rutherford, N.J., 1976. 459 pp. \$15.00.

Tradition and Politics: The Religious Parties of Israel. By Gary S. Schiff. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Mich., 1977. 267 pp. \$14.95.

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scribes as parties of participation, and upon Agudat Yisrael and Poalei Agudat Yisrael, termed parties of separatism. He capsulizes the conflict among the various parties by recalling that the founder of Agudah, Dr. Yitzhak Breuer (1883-1946), had rejected the early Zionists for regarding *Am Yisrael*, the Jewish People, as central to Jewish existence, with the Torah only as a product of its creativity, while the Agudah viewed the Torah as central, with both people and land as instruments to fulfill its commandments. Breuer contemptuously repudiated Mizrachi as being little more than a public relations front for secular Zionism.

Schiff points out that factionalism has always plagued the religious parties, with Poalei Mizrachi, the workers' offshoot, dominating the parent organization, while Poalei Agudah, that workers' sub-grouping, is far less influential than the parent body. Gush Emunim, the Block of the Faithful, is a militant off-shoot of Mizrachi and Poalei Mizrachi (Mafdal), organized shortly after the 1967 war in order to influence the party toward retaining and settling the West Bank. Neturei Karta is a secessionist split from Agudah whom the dissidents accuse of having abandoned its founding principles.

Schiff reveals a pro-Mafdal bias, or at least a lapse of objectivity when he argues against the disestablishment of religion because it would "put religious interests at a distinct disadvantage," when he warns that "the religious party might well be wary" and when he speaks of a "*blatant violation of halakhah*." He also goes into more detail than does Abramov on the statistics of party membership, geographic and ethnic distribution, and the socio-metrics of voting patterns. He devotes less attention to the philosophical and practical implications of the conflict between the religious parties and Israeli society.

Where Schiff focuses on a small area, Abramov uses a wide-angle lens, and background material is more generously available in his work. It unfolds as if it were a novel; it includes suspense and drama, but, unfortunately, there is no denouement. At the end, the dilemma remains confounding, perplexing, agitating, and even absurd. Though crying for resolution, it must be lived through. Eventually it will be resolved; what reason cannot achieve, time surely will accomplish.

A novel requires "villains." In *Perpetual Dilemma* that role is played by the Neturei Karta and the Agudat Yisrael. The "heroes" are not their opposite numbers—for the secular or anti-religious elements are found wanting—but the Orthodox proponents of a broad tradition that would be hospitable to the observant and the non-observant Jew and who envisioned the State, if not as the end product of Israel's redemption, at least as an important stage in the ineluctable unfolding of the messianic process. They include Rabbi Fishman-Maimon, who wanted to reconvene a Sanhedrin, Rabbi Samuel Mohilever who equated Zion with others of God's commandments, Rabbi Isaac Reines, a founder of Mizrachi, Rabbi Meir Berlin who favored legislating enactments (*takkanot*) to make Jewish

law more responsive to contemporary needs, and Dr. Moshe Silberg who proposed a new code of Jewish law.

Still another is Professor Isaiah Leibowitz, one of the few Orthodox scholars to grapple with the problem of religious relevance. He has pointed out that the *Shulhan Arukh*, a product of the diaspora, never took into consideration the needs of a Jewish state. It is not surprising, he says, that in the catalogue of the 613 commandments, the precept to uphold organized society is not mentioned. Joseph Karo, the compiler of the Code of Laws, could devote himself to the writing of the *Shulhan Arukh* because he had a collaborator, the Turkish Pasha in Acre, who was responsible for governing the City of Safed where Karo worked. Leibowitz deplores the parasitic nature of Orthodoxy whose practitioners deprive themselves neither of water nor of electricity because other Jews operate the utilities on Sabbath. Orthodox Jews require the protection of a police force on that day, but other Jews perform the police duties. The Orthodox favor granting military exemption to females and yeshivah students because they know that the army will be well-manned by boys and girls who do not study Torah. Orthodoxy extols the holiness of the land, yet it conveys title to it to a Gentile in order to preserve the fiction of the *sh'mitah* year.

The solution, for Professor Leibowitz, lies in formulating new halakhic rules or *takkanot*. To other moderate Orthodox authorities, the solution lies in extending the principle of *pikuah nefesh*, so that services vital to the security of the State and society may be performed even on Sabbath.

Realistic attempts to grapple with the problem on an organizational level are seen in the Kibbutz Tirat Zvi in the Beit Sha-an Valley, whose leader, Moshe Unna, has stated, "The restoration of the halakhic way of life will not come about through political activity, but by the spread of ideas, that is to say, by education in the broadest sense." The Kibbutz Dati is the only group within Mafdal that has not hesitated to criticize the rabbinate. Its members support the drafting of yeshivah students and religious girls, and its own young people serve in the army on a regular basis, regarding the seeking of exemptions as immoral.

How did the dilemma begin? The first chapter in Abramov's volume is prologue to the problem.

In the beginning, which for our purposes was post-crusade Palestine, there was the old Yishuv (Jewish settlement), a community devoted to the study of Torah and to observing as many as possible of the 613 commandments, some of which were applicable only in the Holy Land.

Flowing into this Eden were diverse streams: Ashkenazim from Eastern Europe, driven by oppression and drawn by faith; Sefardim from Spain and Portugal, driven by the Inquisition and drawn by messianic fervor; and native and Eastern Jews who did not know Spain, but who were no strangers to oppression and poverty. The Ashkenazim were more

rigid and militant than the Sefardim who, having lived with Moslems for many generations, were more readily integrated into the Arabic culture. The Ashkenazim were split into Hasidim and Mitnagdim, with the latter subdivided into groups (*kollelim*) based upon country of origin, and having not only unique customs, garb, food and prayer mode, but their own leaders and rabbinic court. Only the Sefardim had a Chief Rabbi, the *Haham Bashi*, the *Rishon L'Zion* who out-ranked the Ashkenazi rabbis by virtue of his being recognized by the Sultan of Turkey.

The old Yishuv lived from funds gathered from Jewish communities throughout the world, forming a distribution system called *halukah* which not only relieved the old Yishuvniks from the need to earn a livelihood, thus enabling them not only to spend entire days and sometimes nights in contemplative study, but, also, to resist the pressures of the external environment and, later, the tantalizing attraction of the enlightenment, that siren called modernism.

Into this mix was plunged a new population group, the new Yishuv, driven by the Russian upheavals of 1881 and drawn by the opportunity to create a new society based upon social idealism and justice: the first Aliyah. The old settlers viewed the new arrivals with apprehension and hostility on two counts: religious and economic. To the elders, the new arrivals appeared as Russian anarchists, lax in their observance of religious precepts and oblivious to the messianic implications of the Holy Land. Furthermore, their stress upon being self-supporting and productive was a challenge to the institution of *halukah*.

The first encounter between the old and the new Yishuv was over the laws of *sh'mitah*, which required, among other things, that land not be tilled or planted during each seventh year. By Biblical mandate, Jewish-owned land was to lie fallow. Hillel's *prozbul* did not apply to reaping the harvest.

When, by calculation, it was realized that the *sh'mitah* year approached, the Ashkenazi rabbis of Palestine, agitated by potential conflict, turned to distinguished colleagues in Russia for guidance, which they then ignored. The Sefardi Chief Rabbi had agreed to solve the problem by conveyance of the land to a non-Jew, a solution rejected by the Ashkenazi rabbis in Jerusalem who then suggested to Baron Rothschild that the farmers be maintained by his bountiful charity during the *sh'mitah* year, a policy wholly inconsistent with the independent spirit of the new Yishuv. The question of *sh'mitah* was only the first encounter; the gulf between the new and the old was to become even wider.

The contemporary rabbinic practice of utilizing a tourist hotel's need for rabbinic certification or *hekhsher* for its food preparation as leverage to enforce such non-food requirements as closing down the elevator on the Sabbath, or the swimming pool for mixed bathing, is rooted in the example of the rabbis of the old Yishuv using their *hekhsher* power to compel wine growers in Rehovot in 1890 to eliminate all secular subjects from

their school and to desist from allowing girls to attend school, threatening to withhold the kosher certificate for wine if the growers did not abide by rabbinic ruling. As Moshe Smilansky wrote, "The influence of the Jerusalem rabbis was considerable, for the wine sold to Jews in the diaspora required the kashrut certificate of the rabbis."

During the difficult days of the first World War, efforts to unify the Jewish population to enable them to face their challengers with a united front were thwarted by those who refused to allow women to vote. So great was the opposition of the extreme Orthodox to Jewish self-government that some of the leaders of the old Yishuv in Jerusalem established contacts with agents of the Italian Foreign Office in order to block Zionist ambitions. In the Mandatory years, Agudat Yisrael repeatedly repudiated the concept of united Jewish self-government.

Under the Ottoman rule the old Yishuv had outnumbered the new and, because of the ever-flowing *halukah* funds, enjoyed financial independence, but this dominance was ended by the first World War, which shattered the *halukah* system, and by the Balfour Declaration, which increased the numbers and the strength of Zionist settlers.

While directing their energies toward opposing the struggle of the new Yishuv for self-government, Agudat Yisrael's most intense opposition was directed against the Mizrachi group because of the latter's cooperation with the Chief Rabbinate and the arms of Zionism.

In 1934, a group of European Agudah members migrated to Palestine and eventually assumed control of the Palestine Agudah, which up to then had been in the hands of the native old Yishuv, whereupon a number of the ultra-Orthodox Yishuv withdrew from Agudat Yisrael to found their own group, Neturei Karta, a total rejectionist front.

At the moment of the State's founding in 1948 there was a brief period of unity, with Agudat Yisrael participating and sharing power with the secularists and Mizrachi. In drafting the Declaration of Independence, a split on theology was avoided by using the phrase "Rock of Israel," a term acceptable to both Orthodox and secularist, with each lending to the phrase its own interpretation.

Attempts to create a written constitution foundered because of the opposition of the Agudah, whose leadership stated that there was no need for a man-made constitution. If it contradicted the Torah of Israel it would be a revolt against the Almighty, and if it were identical with the Torah it would be superfluous. Mizrachi had previously favored a constitution, but fear of criticism eventually led it to join the Agudah in opposing what it had originally favored.

Unlike the Agudah, Mizrachi was willing to cooperate with Israel's secular parties. By encouraging *aliyah*, it increased the number of its adherents in Palestine. Through its efforts, the Chief Rabbinate was recognized as the sole religious authority in the Yishuv. The Chief Rabbinate failed, however, to make any significant religious impact, since it was

concerned primarily with ritual. Once the state was born, no serious thought was given by the Chief Rabbinate to making the halakhah responsive to the needs of a modern society.

Of all the Orthodox groupings, it is the Neturei Karta who have maintained total consistency: hostility to the State. Like Zadoc Kahn, they feel that halakhah is in conflict with the State, and, like him, they conclude not that halakhah needs to be reformed, but that a Jewish state is impossible, in theory, and illegitimate, in fact. Though domiciled in the Holy Land, their members regard themselves as living in the diaspora.

Agudat Yisrael, while not viewing the State of Israel as part of the messianic scheme, do not repudiate it; they are less interested in promoting legislation enforcing religious observance than in preventing legislation that might be prejudicial to the interests of religion or that runs counter to halakhah. Mizrahi, on the other hand, actively seeks legislation that would enforce halakhic regulations on all of Israel, reasoning that to enact laws imposing religious observance is not so much an infringement on personal conscience as it is a restraint of the evil impulse. They have, thus, furthered legislation covering dietary habits, pig breeding, marriage and divorce, arguing that just as the prohibition of theft or murder is not a matter to be democratically deduced, so are the principles of halakhah beyond the need for democratic affirmation.

In reviewing the history of Turkish Zionism, one derives a clarifying insight. It was the need for continuity and orderly transition from Turkish law to Mandatory law to Israeli law that explains the anomaly not only of the preservation of archaic civil procedures, but of inconsistent ones. For example: buses operate on the Sabbath in Haifa but not in Tel Aviv, much less Jerusalem; there is a dual Chief Rabbinate, Sefardi and Ashkenazi; the Orthodox rabbinate has the monopoly in matters of marriage, divorce, conversion and the recognition of the Orthodox rabbinate to the exclusion of Conservative or Reform. The explanation lies in the concept of a "status quo" rooted in the Turkish period, later reaffirmed by the British Mandatory government, and reaffirmed once again at the birth of Israel in 1948. There were no Conservative, Reform or Reconstructionist rabbis in the original Turkish "status quo;" by the fact of "status quo," Orthodox was synonymous with religion and with halakhah, so that the troublesome clause appended to many a law, "in accordance with halakhah," meant, in effect, that the law would be supervised, if not administered, by only the Orthodox Rabbinate.

In the legislative process, every concession obtained by the Orthodox parties is, thus, a permanent gain, for it then becomes part of the "status quo," making for a slow but steady enlargement of the area over which Orthodox religion holds sway.

In retrospect, in the absence of any moderating force, hardships imposed by a halakhah resistant to change have fallen heavily on women seeking divorce from recalcitrant husbands, upon childless widows re-

quired to undergo *halizah* before the possibility of marriage, upon wives of adulterous husbands, upon Karaites and the B'nei Israel of India whose Jewish status has been questioned and, to a lesser degree, upon Conservative and Reform Jews.

The rabbinate would prefer common-law marriages or even civil marriages in Cyprus to marriage performed by a Conservative or Reform rabbi. Rabbis who serve in non-Orthodox congregations are not recognized as such by the official rabbinate. They cannot be members of the rabbinical court, nor can they deal with marriage and divorce or with applications for conversion. They may not even celebrate marriages of members of their own congregation, though in some cases where the rabbi is "known to be personally observant," he may participate in such a ceremony under the guidance of an Orthodox colleague.

In Kfar Shmaryahu a group sought a court order to lease a municipal sports gymnasium to conduct non-Orthodox High Holiday services. The judge asked the attorney for the rabbinate, which opposed the lease, "Would it be better for them not to pray at all?" and the reply of the attorney was, "In my opinion it would be better for them not to pray at all than to pray in the Reform manner."

The playing of music in hotels on the Sabbath is prohibited by the rabbinate who make the observance of this prohibition a condition precedent to the issuance of a certificate of kashrut. The conflict with the Jerusalem rabbinate over its refusal to grant a kashrut certificate to a hotel because its swimming pool was open to mixed bathing, was followed by a similar conflict at the Hebrew University which has decided to keep its pool open on Saturdays as well. The university took an unyielding stand.

How do the Orthodox groups impose their will? In two ways:

1. No Israeli election has given any party an outright majority; each election has produced a coalition government, which, with a few brief exceptions, has included the religious parties.

2. The Orthodox Party has always claimed for itself certain portfolios in government: that of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and that of the Ministry of Interior—the latter because its control over the Bureau which registers personal identity has enabled the rabbinate to make certain that no person is registered as a Jew unless he passes their definition of a Jew.

Of all the questions that have plagued the relationship between the Orthodox establishment and the civil authorities, few have been more persistent and troublesome than "Who is a Jew?" and its corollary, "Who is a convert?" The B'nei Israel and Karaites had run afoul of the halakhic definition of Judaism in the early years of statehood; neither group is yet satisfied with the resolution of its claim.

Other test cases include those of Brother Daniel, in which the Orthodox were upheld (1962), the children of the Shalit family, in which the court ordered that, though their mother was non-Jewish, they be regis-

tered as Jews by nationality (1968), and Helen Zeidman (1964), whose case was rendered moot by her re-immersion in a *mikvah*, but which, in its implication, invalidated the conversion of a woman to Reform Judaism.

The most recent encounter between the Orthodox establishment and the Conservative and Reform movements occurred in the summer of 1977 when the Begin government undertook to fulfill a commitment to the Orthodox parties to change the Law of Return in a manner which, would deny Jewish identity and the benefits of the Law of Return to persons converted by Conservative, Reform or Reconstructionist rabbis.

The background to Orthodoxy's desire to change the Law of Return goes back to the Shalit case, which, according to Gideon Hausner, was both a bad example and a poor case because few in Israel believe that a child of a non-Jewish mother should be registered as a Jew. As a result of the court's verdict defining the child of a non-Jewish mother as a Jew, the Knesset promulgated a definition of a Jew for the sake of the census or personal registry and for the Law of Return which was as follows:

"For the purpose of this law, 'Jew' means a person born to a Jewish mother or who has become converted to Judaism, and who is not a member of another religion." The Orthodox parties had insisted on adding "in accordance with halakhah" after the words "converted to Judaism," to disqualify conversions performed by Conservative or Reform rabbis in the diaspora. Mrs. Meir refused to yield on this point, on the ground that the Knesset could legislate with respect to conversion in Israel but was not entitled to determine the kind of conversions that might be carried out in the diaspora (*Perpetual Dilemma*, p. 304).

Implicit in the accepted definition without the catch phrase "according to halakah," was the recognition by the Knesset that, though the Orthodox enjoyed a monopoly in Israel, in the diaspora where Judaism was pluralistic, a person converted to Judaism by a Conservative or Reform rabbi was accepted as a Jew and should, therefore, come within the definition of "Jew" for the purposes of the Law of Return.

It is on this issue that the Schiff volume falls short, revealing either a lamentable lack of understanding of the implications of the dispute, or a blinding pro-Mafdal bias, for he justifies the demand for "halakhic conversion"—because of the large-scale immigration of Soviet Jews, "many of whom had non-Jewish spouses who may not have been properly converted according to halakhah." He makes no mention of the fact that one of the reasons for demanding the inclusion of the phrase was deliberately to repudiate those converted in the United States and Canada by Conservative and Reform rabbis. It is as though he were not aware of the existence of a diaspora or of a non-Orthodox Judaism.

Even though it is admitted that conversion to Judaism under Conservative auspices is dictated by the same halakhic requirements which the Orthodox define, Conservative-supervised converts are, nonetheless, rejected because of the identity of the officiating rabbis; so the question

translates not into who is a legitimate convert, not even into who is a Jew, but, who is a rabbi? This point is lost upon Schiff, but not upon Abramov.

Prior attempts to amend the Law of Return had been successfully opposed by the joint intercession of the American Conservative and Reform movements which prevailed successively upon Prime Ministers Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, and Yitzhak Rabin to block the efforts of the Orthodox parties. In the most recent effort, in the summer of 1977, Prime Minister Begin proposed to establish a Joint Conversion Court in the United States, but no sooner was it announced than it was rejected by the rabbinate, who will accept no arrangement that will grant recognition, however limited, to Conservative or Reform rabbis. Israeli political and religious leaders would prefer to deal separately with the Conservative movement, but it is quite evident that any proposal which would exclude the Reform rabbinate would also serve to separate the right-wing Conservative rabbis from the more liberal Conservative ones.

In their statement to Prime Minister Begin, dated August 1977, leaders of the Reform and Conservative rabbinate, acting in concert, indicated that they would accept any solution that would permit the participation of the diaspora's religious groups on a basis of equality. "Israel has the right to set standards for those who want to become its citizens, but any rabbi, of whatever persuasion, who abides by those standards should be believed as trustworthy and his converts accepted as authentic Jews," the Conservative-Reform position stated, going on to say, "Once we certify that we have followed our agreed procedure, the Chief Rabbinate has no right to invalidate the *ger* (convert) because they wish to invalidate the rabbi." This is the heart of the problem: though the Orthodox leaders may recognize the credentials of a handful of Conservative (but not a single one of the Reform) rabbis who are known to be "personally fully observant," they have persisted in refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the Conservative or Reform rabbinate, even denying that they are rabbis, much less *rabbanim*. "Every dog has four legs, but not every four-legged creature is a dog," said one of the two Chief Rabbis. "So every rabbi may be a Jew, but not every Jew who calls himself a rabbi is necessarily one."

In the opinion of the Orthodox, the presence of Conservative and Reform rabbis and congregations in Israel will destroy the unity of the Jewish people. They view the emergence of an alternative to Orthodoxy as an alien importation and insist that only the strictest application of halakhic rules in matters of family law and conversion will assure Jewish unity, an argument which appeals even to some non-religious Israelis.

It is the tragedy of Israel that a militant and fanatic minority exercises an influence far beyond its numbers over the personal lives of Israel's citizens, confusing compulsion with religion, monopoly with faith, and, conversely, volunteerism with secularism, pluralism with assimilation, and alternatives with licentiousness.

While Orthodoxy is not of one cloth, all are hostage to the threat of the most extreme. More moderate elements in Mizrahi look over their right shoulders for the approval of, or at least to avoid the condemnation of, the more rigorous Agudat Yisrael, whose participation in the government is always occasional and tentative, and they, in turn, look over their right shoulders to evade the condemnation of the Neturei Karta, who feel that Israel is a heresy, while they, in turn, looked to their leader, the late Rabbi Amram Blau, who presumably looked over his shoulder for the approval of his wife who, as a convert to Judaism, is the most rigorous of all. And hovering over all is the Rebbe of Lubavitch, a *deus ex machina* in Brooklyn, cajoling, guiding, pressuring and, what is more, prevailing.

Despite its influence in Israel, the Orthodox world of Israel appears ambivalent about the place of the State in the Jewish scheme, and even some of those who accept the theological validity of the State and who concede the need for strengthening it through immigration, would prefer to limit that immigration to observant and Orthodox Jews.

One of the Chief Rabbis complained about the demands of American Conservative Jews for a Conservative-track religious school in Jerusalem, suggesting that if this is what American Jews wanted, it would be better if they did not migrate to Israel. "It is better to have ten thousand observant Jews in Israel than ten million who are not observant."

The attitude of the Chief Rabbinate toward Independence Day has been one of equivocation and contradiction, damning with faint praise, permitting the recitation of Hallel to mark the birth of Israel, but without a benediction. Many yeshivot in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak refuse to allow their students to participate in Independence Day festivities; some have made it a fast day of mourning.

Is there a possibility that Orthodoxy may some day "reform" itself from within? Dr. Abramov feels it is unlikely. "Fear of the more extreme elements on one hand, and suspicion of innovation on the other preclude any possibility of change."

There is hope, modest though it may be, in the increase in numbers of Reform and Conservative Jews and synagogues in Israel. Abramov feels that the movements are handicapped by functioning separately.

The historical circumstances that may have led to their separate existence in the United States are irrelevant when applied to the Israeli scene. The climate of Israel, saturated as it is with religious symbols, has had a levelling effect on the two movements. A unified program of action would be of advantage to the development of a religious alternative in Israel.

(*Perpetual Dilemma*, p. 399).

While Reform and Conservative rabbis who have settled in Israel bravely endure, endeavoring to constitute a mission to the Jews, their efforts would be strengthened if Israeli-born and educated young men were to be recruited to study in the United States for the non-Orthodox rabbinate and then return to Israel.

For want of cooperation between them, Conservative and Reform Judaism in Israel are weak, relatively unknown, with their rabbis and leaders confused on their roles and identity. Indeed, some Conservative rabbis try to pass themselves off as Orthodox, thinking that thus they will gain quicker and broader acceptance.

Dr. Abramov's volume is a challenge, not only to Israel's religious establishment, but even more to American Orthodoxy, which is thriving in the pluralistic atmosphere of the United States. Its leaders are aware of the dangers and the unfairness of the Orthodox monopoly in the area of religion in Israel but, when they are not altogether silent, they speak out in support of that monopoly and in favor of denying religious alternatives to the Jews of Israel. Abramov's book, more than that of Schiff, flings a challenge at them and at their leaders.

The halakhah which rules the lives of Israeli Jews in matters of faith, marriage, divorce, Sabbath, food, and personal identity is an outgrowth of a body of law that reacted to a world in which 1. Jews were everywhere an oppressed minority; 2. an ample number of non-Jews were available to perform those duties which Jews were not allowed to perform on the Sabbath and festivals; 3. a non-Jewish state provided the services which Jews, like all people, needed for their existence: army, police, sanitation and civil service. None of these situations prevails in Israel today. Therein lies the tragedy: religion in Israel has failed to react to new situations. It is sad to conclude that while the roots of the State of Israel are to be found in the ancient faith of Israel, that same faith today—after Sadat—constitutes one of the most complicated problems that Israel faces.

In the best seller of some years ago, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, British prisoners of war in a Japanese camp were assigned to a Japanese commander and forced to build a railroad bridge for use of the Japanese. The soldiers worked with little efficiency and with deliberate clumsiness so as to frustrate the Japanese officer. The British commander insisted that the Articles of War required that the British soldiers be subject to his command, and not to that of a Japanese overseer. Once given authority, he demanded that his men conduct themselves in accordance with the dictates of the war manual and in a manner befitting soldiers of His Majesty's Army, even under prison conditions. In the end, in fulfillment of the letter of military law, British prisoners, under a British commander, built the railroad bridge for the Japanese. In the madness of legalistic logic, the British commander, who lived by the book, ended up by working with the enemy to destroy the very thing that was more sacred to him than life itself. And that is where such madness can lead us.

The Jewish State and Jewish History: Contradiction or Continuation?

EVYATAR FRIESEL

ONE OF THE MAJOR ARGUMENTS IN THE continuing debate on Jewish statehood, sometimes heard even from Zionists, is that Zionism in its political form (culminating in the establishment of the Jewish state) has a doubtful relationship to Jewish history. And if political Zionism is out of tune with Jewish history, then Zionist activity and behavior in Palestine during the last three generations is not only morally questionable, but, worse, it may well be an aberrancy in Jewish terms. In other words, not only would Jewish statehood represent an offense against the Arabs, it also compromises what might be called the sense of Jewish historical existence.¹

Many of the opinions running along these lines come from intellectuals with impeccable credentials who express sincere interest and honest concern. Indeed, the question *per se*—the relationship between the Jewish state and Jewish history—is not to be ignored. Does Jewish statehood represent a revolt against Jewish history, or is it an organic continuation of it? If it is a continuation, how is one to understand the major modifications that it has brought to the form and essence of Jewish life?

* * *

Historically, Zionism should be examined in the context of the two main dimensions of Jewish existence during the Diaspora period: one, the position of the Jews in society in general; the other, the internal trends in Jewish society itself. Each dimension, albeit influenced by the other, had its own dynamics and should be considered separately before we relate both to the development of Zionism.

Jewish survival is a baffling phenomenon that has still not been adequately defined by the accepted criteria of historical analysis. It is more aptly dealt with in meta-historical or theological terms. Apparently, the best that the historian can do is to illuminate various aspects, knowing that these do not fully explain the mystery of Jewish existence itself. One of these aspects was the capacity of historical Jewish society, in the dif-

1. One of the most skillful works arguing that case is A. R. Taylor and R. N. Tetlie, eds. *Palestine: A Search for Truth—Approaches to the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Washington, 1970).

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ferent centers of the Diaspora, from Babylon to Spain, from Germany to Poland, to create an optimum of Jewish adaptation to the conditions and concepts of the surrounding society, without forfeiting the traditional forms and values of Judaism. The *kehillah*, the Jewish community as it developed during the Middle Ages, may be seen as a typical example of this double trend of adaptation and specificity. Jewish philosophy in Moslem Spain was, among many others, a similar case.

Every age brought new conditions and challenges, and the modern period particularly so. Under the influence of the citizenship status that was allotted to Jews after the French Revolution, a tendency began to develop among them to adapt and explain Jewish existence according to these new concepts. Later, the ideas of modern nationalism again dictated a new chapter in Jewish self-definition.

Since each country in which the Jews lived had its own particular cultural and social life, their integration into society varied from place to place. By considering the process in a larger historical framework, however, we can point to some trends that were common to Jewry as a whole, regardless of location. Everywhere the Jewish minority accepted and absorbed the form and concepts of the surrounding society but transformed them into elements of its own and produced a kind of life that was inherently Jewish.

This combination of elasticity and rigidity—elasticity in the openness to general values and rigidity in the tenacious attachment to Jewish life—should be recognized as a process of continuing historical creation in a very fundamental sense: not only because it was original, but, also, because it was indispensable. It is difficult to imagine Jews living in the midst of a given society but completely isolated from it; it is equally difficult—as we have witnessed in many countries during the last 150 years—to imagine Jewish group existence beyond a certain point of integration into general society.

This ever-repeating process of adaptation to the ideological concepts and social norms of the general society has never been purely mechanical or without problems. It always occurred under pressure from without and from within. It was always accompanied by internal doubts, heated argument, and splits within the Jewish group. The relationship between the Jewish minority and the surrounding society was always tense; the history of the different Jewish communities was rarely untroubled. Twice, in Europe, it reached points of crisis: once, during the middle of the seventeenth century, when, after 350 years of gradual expulsion from different countries the demographic situation of the Jewish people touched a low point apparently unknown since the period of the Judges; the second time was the Holocaust, during World War II.

* * *

In comparing the status of the Jews in the Middle Ages with their status in the modern period, we notice a significant difference. Up to the second half of the eighteenth century, European society accepted the presence of the Jews as a group. For better or for worse, the relationship between non-Jews and Jews was built on the principle that the Jews were what was then called a "nation." But, during the period of European Enlightenment and Absolutism in the eighteenth century, there arose new political and social concepts that eroded the basis of Jewish group existence. In the process of creating a direct relationship with subjects or citizens, the developing modern state aimed to weaken independent organic group structures like corporations and guilds, or, in the case of the Jews, the *kehillah*. The most influential formulation of new conditions for Jewish existence in Europe was made during the French Revolution. In 1791, the French National Assembly established the right of the Jews to citizenship, but attached to it, as a condition, the renunciation of their separate group existence and their integration into French society. Explicitly or implicitly, partially or totally, this approach was adopted by most of the Central and West European countries during the following century.

European Jewry gradually accepted this new status of citizenship and began the long and arduous journey towards integration, political and otherwise, into European society. A study of the trends in European Jewish society during the nineteenth century shows that, once again, knowingly or unknowingly, the Jews were trying to adapt to the new demands of society, reorganizing their social and spiritual structure in order to re-create the age-old synthesis between Jewish and non-Jewish values that had been the very condition for their continued existence. Religious developments like the Reform movement, or the neo-Orthodoxy of Samson Raphael Hirsch; organizational forms like the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, the Board of Deputies, or the *Central-verein Deutscher Staatsbuerger Juedischen Glaubens*; public-cultural expressions like the Jewish press; cultural creations like the literary work of Jewish writers, expressing infinite shades of amalgamation between Jewish and non-Jewish themes and elements—all of these, and many more, were the expressions of the new trend of Jewish adaptation to general society.

* * *

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century it became increasingly clear that, under the ideological conditions of modern Europe, the balance between integration and exclusiveness would be problematic for Jewish, as well as general, reasons.

European society was never able to determine what were the actual rights of the Jews as *Jews*, not as citizens. At least in Western Europe the Jews tried to formulate an answer to that question. Judaism was explained

there in terms and limits of *religion* and, as such, representing a legitimate frame of belief beside the other European religions. But this was, at best, a very partial solution: it left open crucial questions regarding Jewish existence, and it was never accepted by the majority of East European Jewry. Worse, in the tortuous dialogue that now developed between Jews and non-Jews, it turned out to be a poor argument. European thought after the Reformation was never again of one mind about anything, and the polarization of European political and social philosophy reflected itself in the Jewish question as in everything else. If the liberal approach asserted the rights of the Jew as a human being, the conservative-romantic trend stressed the essentially alien character of the Jewish presence in the midst of the European peoples. The ideological scene regarding the Jews was even more confusing: liberal thought in Germany affirmed equally the supremacy of the modern State, with its emphasis on the creation of a uniform *Kultur* and the necessity of absorbing the diverse cultural and national minorities. None other than Theodor Mommsen, that pillar of German liberalism, was critical of *any* form of continuing Jewish identity, even of a diluted religious kind. Since the admission into a great nation has its price, Mommsen's argument ran, why should not the Jews pay it, like everybody else?

Mommsen's position, in spite of its portentous implications for the continuation of Jewry, has elements of moderation: after all, he believed in the positive contribution that the assimilating Jews had to offer to the emerging German identity, though other German intellectuals saw them as pernicious and unassimilable. The dialectics of the Jewish-non-Jewish relationship now underwent a strange transformation. For centuries it had been the Christian society that had pressed for the conversion of the Jews; now, there was a turn-about. Faced with the thrust toward integration, influenced by new theories about race and nation, segments of non-Jewish society reassessed their position and began to question the Jewish presence in European society. The strange corollary was that the most assimilated, the least Jewish among the Jews, were now considered the least acceptable, since their penetration into the body and the soul of the German nation was considered the deepest, the most influential, and, therefore, the most pernicious.

In the Jewish world there were ideological developments of a no less contradictory nature, and reactions to the new cultural and social challenges were clearly different in Western and Eastern Europe. In East European Jewish society, which was larger in numbers, more vital, and with a much more solid social structure, the dialectics of integration worked in its own way. So central a value of modern European political thought as nationalism, filtering through the lens of this Jewish society that was still enclosed in its own forms of life, produced an antithetic effect: *Jewish* nationalism and Zionism, which were already a product of Jewish cultural integration, but, at the same time, it brought about a

negation of this integration. This negation adopted different ideological stances: Jewish socialism, standing in opposition to the *present* society, and striving to reform it in the future; Autonomism, aiming at the creation of separate Jewish communities in the major centers of Jewish life; and Zionism, whose goal was the development of a Jewish national home in Palestine. And, again, all of these forms combined among themselves to produce an array of trends and movements including the advantages of each. But they all had an element in common: unwillingness to integrate into society as it was.

Thus, for Jewish existence, the ideological and social developments in modern Europe created problems of dimensions unknown since the beginnings of the Dispersion: the development of the modern State, all-embracing and all pervading, culturally monolithic, bent towards the atomization of human society, intolerant of particularistic forms of social structuralization; the new ambiguity of modern European society regarding Jewish presence in its midst, with its simultaneous total acceptance and total rejection of the Jews; the ambivalence of Jewish society in regard to its own integration into the larger social body, partly adapting itself to its concepts, partly turning against that acceptance as a result of the influence of the same new ideas. Altogether, the trends, both in general and in Jewish society, broke the pattern of a relationship that had developed between Jews and non-Jews in Europe during more than a thousand years. Under the crumbling conditions of the social and ideological structure of its existence in a Diaspora situation, the Jewish group tried once again to develop new answers to the question of its existence in the changing circumstances of the surrounding world. Zionism was one of these answers.

* * *

There were three indispensable components of Zionism. The first was the historical "Love of Zion," the longing for the Return, present in Jewish religion, culture and consciousness, and constant in Jewish life all through the Exile. The second was the influence of modern Nationalism, its interpretations, values, hopes. The third was the tension between non-Jewish and Jewish society, generally called modern anti-Semitism, which now assumed new forms and expressions.

All three of these factors had to be present, but their varying intensity produced the different ideological trends that developed in Zionist thought and action. For example, recognition of the crisis in the relationship between non-Jews and Jews represented the central factor in the Zionist position of many West European or west-Europeanizing Jews like Pinsker or Herzl. It combined with a measure of national thinking, the third component—Jewish consciousness and attachment to the Land of Israel—being the weaker link. The combination of factors was again

different in East European Zionist circles. Here, modern nationalism was already present, as was awareness of the crisis in the relationship between Jews and non-Jews. But the impelling factor was the traditional attachment to the Holy Land of a group that was intensely Jewish in culture, religion and social ties. We could continue on and on, showing how every sociological position in modern Jewry produced its own particular brand of Zionism.

What all of these positions had in common was that they were typical of a Jewish society which, however it differed in each country, was characterized by a measure of Jewish consciousness combined with a measure of absorption of the cultural values and political concepts of Modern European thought. Neither one of the fringes of Jewish society was open to the influence of the Zionist idea in any form. At one extreme, the completely Orthodox Jews of the old school rejected every attempt to interpret the religious promise of the Return in terms tinged by modern secularism and nationalism. At the other extreme, the almost-assimilated among the Jews rejected the view of modern Jewry as having its own destiny as a group, maintaining that Jews were full members of the social and cultural society of their respective countries, different only in matters of cult. It should be added that most of these groups found a compromise of sorts with Zionism *after* the establishment of the State of Israel, but during the long and arduous political and spiritual struggle towards that goal they stood aloof, in the best of cases. As a rule, they were actively antagonistic to Zionist endeavors.

In spite of the fact that Zionism spoke to, and for, a central body of Jewish society, the movement, as such, labored under two major disadvantages. The first was its basic radicalism, its all-changing and all-transforming hopes which made it able to arouse unlimited dedication among small elite groups but unable to evoke mass-action. The history of Zionism is one of constant tension between the elite and the masses, who were considered sensitive enough to perceive the significance of the movement's message, but never quick and decided enough to answer the Zionist challenge at the right time. The second disadvantage was that Zionism arose at a time of extreme weakness in Jewish society, strained as it was by centrifugal trends, plagued by internal dissensions, and later haunted by the consequences of the Holocaust.

Yet, the importance of Zionism as an answer to the problem of Jewish existence in the 20th century was that it expressed the group consciousness of a large central sector of the Jewish people and offered a solution in the spirit of the social and political trends of our day. Zionism brought about the re-politization of the Jewish people through Jewish statehood at a time when no other framework seemed to guarantee the continuation of Jewish existence. This was due both to the new meaning of Jewish integration, which opened the way towards total assimilation, and to the destructive trends of the historical confrontation between non-Jews and Jews in

twentieth century Europe. Zionism may not be the only Jewish answer to the problem of Jewish survival in our era, but it seems to be the solution most attuned to the historical process that has characterized Jewish history from its beginning—that blending of adaptation to the trends of general society with the preservation of Jewish social and spiritual specificity.

* * *

Our attempt to explain what Zionism is should include a reference to what Zionism is not, or what it has not been able to attain.

Two basic misunderstandings regarding the meaning of Zionism find both direct or indirect expression in Zionist and anti-Zionist literature. One deals with the connection between Zionism and anti-Semitism; the other is about the spiritual dimension in Zionism.

The idea of connecting Zionism with anti-Semitism originated actually among the Jews and has been stressed by Jewish opponents of the Zionist idea since the formation of the movement. It was to be found—even as a central theme—in the thought of some of the founding fathers of Zionism and its easy logic made it readily acceptable among non-Jews also. Its most extreme and simplistic formulation is found today in the Arab critique against the Zionist movement. From the Arab point of view it is convenient, indeed, to describe Zionism as a consequence of the persecutions against the Jews in Europe. If so, the inevitable conclusion is to ask why the Arabs in Palestine should pay for something they did not do.² Since the Arabs have to cope with the Zionist question no less than the Jews have to cope with the Arab question, it is legitimate to ask whether Arab political thought can really afford so simplistic a misrepresentation. If Zionism is only a reaction to persecution, how is one to explain the vitality of what Zionism has created in Israel? Persecutions, as history teaches, do not create, they only destroy. In order to develop a positive solution to a threatening situation, the group under pressure must be endowed with qualities which are the necessary materials of new historical creation. The pressure against the Jews, during the last hundred years, was certainly one of the necessary ingredients of Zionism. Alone, however, it was never a sufficient explanation, and its exact importance is open to historical re-evaluation.

The second argument, concerning the lack of Jewish spirituality in an atmosphere of Zionist materialism and *Real-Politik*, developed exclusively during the internal Jewish debate about Zionism; non-Jews, at least in Europe, never had doubts about the spiritual qualities of Zionism. This critical preoccupation with the future of Jewish morality and spirit in a Jewish state is truly baffling, not so much because it chooses to ignore the

2. See W. F. Abboushi, *The Angry Arabs* (1974). The same line of reasoning is to be found among almost all Arab historical analyses of Zionism.

creative expressions of Zionism, but because it apparently supposes that the crisis of modern Diaspora Judaism has been less spiritual than it has been social and political.

It is true that the period of modern Jewish integration, from the end of the 18th century onwards, witnessed an astonishing degree of Jewish participation in every field of European arts and knowledge. But these were the creative efforts of Jews as members of the general society, adding little to the cultural life of the Jewish group itself. To contribute to mankind's spiritual treasure is certainly laudable but the fact is that, in the historical situation we are dealing with, Jewish spiritual creation turned out to be an intellectual bloodletting of forces from the Jewish society. Not that the Jewish contribution was ever wanted or appreciated. Gershom Scholem, reflecting during the sixties on the spiritual destiny of German Jewry, wrote in a mood of sad indignation:

There were misunderstood geniuses among the Jews, prophets without honor, men of mind who stood up for justice, and who also stood up—to an astonishing degree—for the great spirits among the Germans themselves. (Thus almost all the most important critical interpretations of Goethe were written by Jews!) But among the Germans there was never anyone who stood up for the misunderstood geniuses who were Jews . . . At a time when no one cared a whit about them, no German stood forth to recognize the genius of Kafka, Simmel, Freud or Walter Benjamin—to say nothing of recognizing them as Jews. The present, belated concern with these great figures does nothing to change this fact.³

If Jewish survival is an honorable point of reference, the moral and spiritual situation of the Jews during the period of modern integration was certainly a part of the menacing pattern developing with regard to the future of European Jewry.

All this is not meant to suggest that Zionism was, or that Israel is, the sure answer to the problems of Jewish spiritual survival, or, even worse, that Jewish statehood may not bring about the Balkanization of the Jewish people. There seems to be no way for modern Jewry to avoid paying the price for the upheavals that it underwent in body and in soul, and which had inevitable traumatic consequences for every aspect of Jewish life. Measured by the unique standards of 3,000 years of Jewish creation, some of the spiritual aspects of modern Israel, religious or secular, look pale, indeed. Many of the cultural trends in Israel still suffer from the ambivalent influence of the revolt against what was despised in Zionist ideology as "the burden of the heritage." Furthermore, it is senseless to argue, as many Zionists did, that it is only a matter of time before a new Jewish cultural dimension develops in Israel. No measure of insight gives anybody the intellectual right to write a *carte blanche* on the future. But it may be said that if Zionism and Jewish statehood, while encompassing a central

3. "Germans and Jews," *Commentary*, (Nov. 1966): 37.

body of the Jewish people, are attuned both to modern realities and to the sense of Jewish history—then there is at least reason to hope that out of the labor of the generations in the Old-New Land a Jewish culture will again arise, matching the historical creation of the Jewish spirit.

* * *

Lastly, some of the traditional beliefs of Zionist ideology have come up for re-evaluation as well. One of the central axioms of Zionist faith was that the establishment of a Jewish National Home and, later, a Jewish state in Palestine, would bring about the “normalization” of the Jewish people. It may be argued, of course, that “normalization” is a rather strange concept, since it may well prove impossible to explain what a “normal” people actually is. The very aspiration to “normalcy” seems to be specific to the arsenal of Jewish modern social thought, Zionist and non-Zionist, and rather devoid of meaning in the ideological context of other nations and peoples. But even without elaborating upon the theoretical argument, by now, thirty years later, there is reason to conclude that the creation of the Jewish state did *not* change the Jewish condition basically—in other words, it did not change the relationship between Jews and non-Jews.

The position of the Jewish State in the Middle East shows a striking similarity to the situation of European Jews in European society, before World War II: Israel is “anomalous” in the Middle East just as the Jews were “anomalous” in Europe. It is different, it aims to maintain its own social and spiritual image, its trends do not concur with the trends of its neighbors. In a sense, it is almost as if the specificity of the Jewish-non-Jewish relationship were transferred from the European to the Middle Eastern context.

Furthermore, it seems that, in spite of this transfer from one geographical and social environment to another completely different one, many of the traditional ideological expressions of the Jewish-non-Jewish relationship have been maintained—and, surprisingly enough, on *both* sides. We hear, among the Arabs, expressions of different shades of understanding, misunderstanding and opposition to the Jewish presence in the Middle East that might have been copied from the textbooks of European thinkers, whether anti-Semitic or not, of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the other hand, we find on the Israeli intellectual scene pronouncements about the Jewish-non-Jewish relationship that look like a copy of what we know from the former European context: from the idea about the specificity of the Jewish people and the special ties between Jews everywhere, to the position preaching the “integration into the environment” (which means, now, the Arab environment), and severing the ties with World Jewry.

* * *

What Zionism and its child, the Jewish state, accomplished was the modernization of the Jewish situation. The creation of the state represented the adaptation of an ancient people to the ever-changing conceptions and forms of the surrounding world. Rather than solving the problems of Jewish existence, Israel *expresses* them, but it does so in the terms of realities of the twentieth century world. It may be argued that some of the questions that Zionism raised are no less pressing than the ones it tried to solve. Two of them—the relationship between Israeli and World Jewry, and the position of Israel in the Arab Middle Eastern environment—are wide themes whose elaboration may take a very long time. We may even conclude, by now, that Zionism has not made Jewish fate any easier. But, then, in historical terms, one may well wonder how much this really matters. What does matter is that, just as in the past, the Jewish people again showed the internal strength to transform its social and spiritual structures, to adapt itself to the changed conditions of the general environment, and, at the same time, to maintain its Jewish specificity. Considered in this way, Zionism and the Jewish state represent that essential trend in Jewish life which, in a large, historical sense, has been one of the central factors in the continuing existence of the Jewish people.

Exploring the Inner Bialik

NILI WACHTEL

THERE ARE AS MANY CRITICAL APPROACHES to Bialik's work as there are critics, and each labors to illuminate—sometimes to obscure—an aspect of it. But no one has so profoundly affected the current of Bialik-criticism, no one has been as responsible for the direction that it is taking today—and shows every sign of taking in the future—as the noted Israeli critic, Dov Sadan. His approach, first introduced in the 1930s, locates the essence of Bialik's world in an inner, unconscious realm of experience, which makes its appearance in the poet's work behind a protective network of images and symbols. The interest, therefore, is not so much in the analysis of technical aspects of the poetry, or in themes and motifs of isolated works, as in uncovering a single, continuous, pivotal world concealed within the known and the visible Bialik.

Of course, this approach is not without its excesses, and there are young critics today who, armed with sophisticated psychoanalytical tools, exhaustively examine every image and symbol and discover ponderous hidden meanings where none exist. But, on the whole, there has been success, over the years, in shedding much light on a realm of Bialik's experience which, until Sadan, went largely unexplored.

That there is a hidden dimension to Bialik was never a point of contention. Bialik himself makes frequent allusions to a private realm of experience that exists apart from his public activity. Most critical excursions into his hidden world begin from two works where it is particularly apparent.

The first of these, the poem, "*Gam be-Hit'aroto le-Eineikhem*" (Even When He Exposes Himself to You), describes the poet as a caged lion longing to break free. You think you know me so well, he rages at his readers, you think I have revealed myself to you! But my verses only hide the inner, real me. Behind them I crouch, seething, waiting, peering out through the lines as if through the bars of a cage.

In the second, an episode from his semi-autobiographical "*Safiah*" (After-growth), Bialik relates a dream that he considers significant. He sees himself trudging behind long, tired caravans that are returning from a fair, plodding their way through sand. Reluctant, dazed, he is carried along, when suddenly, beckoning to him from behind a wall of green reeds, he sees another world: a quiet place of grass and water, familiar,

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inhabited by a youthful stranger who is also familiar. I must escape from the noise and the dust and find my way to the other side of the wall, he says to himself again and again. But still he continues to follow the caravans, while that other world and its stranger slowly accompany him, visible through gaps in the reeds, until they disappear from view. And then Bialik knows: that youth whom I left behind is I! Myself!

The link between the stranger visible among the reeds and the lion peeking out through the bars is not difficult to see, nor is it unreasonable to identify both the stranger and the lion as the poet hiding behind his lines of poetry. What has been the point of contention from the time when Sadan first introduced his approach and until today is: what, precisely, is the content of this hidden world of Bialik?

According to Bialik himself, it is the world as it was first revealed to him in childhood, when, he says, "I was revealed to myself." Set among fields and forests, it was green, fresh, and fertile, filled with magic and vitality. Everything was new, everywhere the juices of creation still flowed. Romping in his own private paradise, he communed with everything that lived in it; like the plant and the animal kingdom he, too, belonged. In "*ha-Breikhah*" (The Pool), one of his most magnificent evocations of that world, Bialik places a pool in the center, a "holy of holies," which captures the world and concentrates it. For the child gazing into the water, drinking in its submerged treasure, it is as if he absorbs the very essence of life, as if he feeds directly on the fountains of creation. From this extraordinary place and experience Bialik was exiled when his father died, and the world lost its special glow. Only occasionally do fragments of his first vision of it still beckon to him, but now as if from behind some partition, some wall. The original, unobstructed sight is gone. Unfinished, unfulfilled, his soul roams the world, longing to restore the radiance of those early days.

For Sadan, the lost world of childhood is the lost world of erotic freedom. In Bialik's longing for his lost, paradisaical state, Sadan sees a yearning for some remembered primordial state in which primitive human instincts are allowed to play unrestrained. In fact, writes Sadan,¹ here, for the first time, modern Hebrew poetry abandons its traditional role of service to the nation in order to perform the service which poetry is meant to perform: namely, to plunge into the deeply buried layers of human consciousness and to expose them to the light of day. Here, writes Sadan, Bialik reaches layers more primary than is the consciousness of belonging to a certain nation, and he attempts to bring to light what is—to Sadan—the root conflict of all human existence: between primitive appetites and passions on the one hand, and society's attempt to restrain them on the other. But, because Bialik's generation was a rational and pragma-

1. All of Sadan's comments are taken from a group of three essays titled "*El ha-Shittin*", in the anthology, *Bialik: Yezirato le-Sugehah bi-R'ee ha-Bikoret*, ed. Gershon Shaked (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1974), pp. 13-23.

tic one, Sadan continues, engrossed in the practical and urgent problems of the day, it was not prepared to deal with the obscure realms of human conflict. Bialik's delving into these realms, therefore, needed to be pushed down deep into his poetry, erupting through to the surface only as intimations, hidden behind veils of symbols, peeking out between the lines.

But eroticism is not, for Sadan, the sole content of Bialik's hidden world. He sees Bialik's generation as an exceptionally limited one, its view of reality exceedingly narrow. Sadan speaks of three "fatal encounters"—with the *yeshivah* in Volozhin, with Aḥad Ha-Am, and with Mendele Mokher Seforim—which influenced Bialik and caused him to curb his own special vision. Volozhin discouraged forays into mysterious layers of the human soul, Aḥad Ha-Am frowned on purely personal musings in Hebrew poetry, and Mendele Mokher Seforim, the great realist, scoffed at what he took to be pure flights of the imagination. All three, writes Sadan, stifled Bialik, diminished him, and confined him to a narrow segment of reality. Bialik, on the other hand, had access to realms of experience not available to ordinary men. He could clamber about in cosmic realms and sing with an ecstasy unknown since the poets of the Kabbalah; he could descend to the innermost chambers of the soul and sing of its anguish. Combining his vision with his national work, Bialik was more than a poet—he was a prophet. Aware of his mission, but restrained by his generation, he did not permit himself to reveal himself. Behind the bars of his poetry, therefore—and here Sadan neatly substitutes *navi* (prophet) for *lavi* (lion)—stalks an angry prophet. But it is Sadan's final and sad conclusion that, because of this inner conflict, Bialik became neither the prophet nor the poet that he might have been.

Over the years, Sadan's approach took off in several directions. Today, many important critics with differing points of view cite him as their teacher and acknowledge their indebtedness to his pioneering efforts. Most still proceed, in one way or another, from his premises, and arrive at their conclusions by exploring Bialik's symbols, their recurrence in various works, and their revelation of profound human experiences that are not adequately transmitted through words. One who continued directly in Sadan's footsteps, whose announced intention it was to develop some of the lines opened up by Sadan, and who, himself, became a base for young critics to build on, is Eddy Zemach.

In a fascinating collection of essays, titled appropriately *ha-Lavi ha-Mistater* (The Hiding Lion),² Zemach sets out to provide textual proof for Sadan's depiction of a poet in conflict, and he concludes by putting his own emphasis on the erotic content of Bialik's hidden world. Bialik sang of Zionism and Renaissance, Zemach concludes, but he wanted to sing of Feigle (his childhood companion and "bride") and love.

2. Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sepher, Ltd., 1969.

In order to prove that behind Bialik's network of symbols lies a veiled wish to return to the erotic freedom of childhood, Zemach carefully analyzes the images and symbols pertaining to Bialik's childhood world, all of them, to his mind, showing erotic love to be the dominant theme. When he encounters these symbols and images in contexts where they seemingly do not belong, in what are thought to be national contexts, Zemach argues that they represent intrusions of "individualistic erotic elements" into the poetry that his nation bade Bialik to sing. In fact, argues Zemach, they represent proof of Bialik's inner conflict: because he had consented to sing his nation's songs, he needed to repress and submerge his own. That they rose to the surface in spite of himself suggests a poet in conflict with his "real I," a private poet forced to hide behind "nationalistic publicistic bars." The lion in Bialik striving to break free, therefore, is the poet in him who craves the freedom to sing as he had always wanted to: of Feigle, of love, of the world "on the other side of the fence."

Zemach goes on to examine Bialik's clearly erotic "*me-Aḥorei ha-Gader*" (On the Other Side of the Fence), a story which he considers to be a key, the focal point of Bialik's inner world, and which contains all the issues and experiences animating that world. It is Bialik's "underground autobiography," Zemach writes,

the depiction of the author's innermost world, the accumulation of all his wishes and the crystallization of his understanding-of-himself-as-he-really-is—and the projection of all these into reality, as if at some point in time they really materialized, as if they really came to be . . .³

The erotic world of "*me-Aḥorei ha-Gader*," in other words, is the real content of Bialik's inner world, expressing what is implied in the various other evocations of that world, except that here, as Zemach adds, it appears openly and frankly, without benefit of veil or symbol.

Now, there is no doubt that some of the most troublesome aspects of Bialik's world are to be found in "*me-Aḥorei ha-Gader*," and that chief among them is the eroticism. Bialik assails the desiccated, sterile life of the Jewish quarter by contrasting it with—on the other side of the fence—the lush, fertile garden that surrounds the one non-Jewish house in the neighborhood. The Jews lead wan, anemic lives, they deal in sawed trees and plucked fruit, while the non-Jews are hearty and lusty and thoroughly rooted in the earth. There is a strong condemnation here of an outlook that transfers its entire life to the realm of the spirit, an outlook that even makes a virtue of the suppression of physical life.⁴ It is the sort of outlook, as Zemach points out, that has its culmination in the figure of *ha-Matmid*,

3. Ibid., p. 66.

4. As, for example, when the boy of the story tells his horrified non-Jewish playmate that his father had killed off all the snakes in their yard (the snake, in Bialik's symbolism, representing the realm of the flesh), contending it was a *mizvah* to do so.

Bialik's pale, frail Yeshivah-student who puts all of his passion and vitality into Torah and Talmud, who, intent on reaching the *Bet ha-Midrash*, is oblivious to a garden full of earthly pleasures on the other side of a fence. But Zemach, who offers in this connection an intriguing discussion of garden and fence as symbols in Bialik's world, makes every garden a garden of erotic pleasures and every fence a fence of Jewish religious and social taboos. His analysis of "*me-Ahorei ha-Gader*" is highly perceptive and, when he remains within bounds of the story, persuasive. But when he projects "*me-Ahorei ha-Gader*" onto the whole of Bialik's world, it appears as a distortion to those who do not share his belief in the centrality of this story. Zemach seems to assume here that a symbol always has the same meaning. Symbols operate, however, on several levels, and the fence, as well as the life that exists beyond it, mean different things in different contexts. They may mean sun and grass and birds outside the walls of the *Bet ha-Midrash*; or they may mean a wide world and a fast-moving life outside of the narrow Jewish fold. In their largest connotation, they may mean the life and the mystery of the universe beyond the reach of ordinary human experience. So that, while the world beyond the fence in "*me-Ahorei ha-Gader*" is an erotic one, and while a key issue in Bialik's work is eroticism, an area of life where the Jew of his time remained incomplete, where Bialik himself aches for fulfillment—it does not follow that the world which Bialik seeks on the other side of the fence is always and totally an erotic one. Eroticism is but one aspect of this world; it is but one manifestation of a larger world, anent which the most that can be said at this juncture is that it seems infinitely more attractive than the world at hand, that it is the object of ultimate desire, and that, in the present life, it is inaccessible. To reduce Bialik's world to a world of repressed eroticism seems to reflect more of today's concerns than of Bialik's. It seems to diminish him and to confine him—to do, in short, what his own generation was accused of doing. What is needed here is a broader view, a view that captures Bialik's world in its entirety.

Bialik's childhood world exudes, above all, a sense of wholeness. The channels between heaven and earth are open, blessings flow from one to the other, and the world is one:

My village after rain. The clouds are scattered, the sun shines. Some great blessing has come down on the world; a new, polished light shines on it. The world is pure. Everything has received a fresh face, from the blue of the sky to the green of the garden and the field . . . Birds amid the branches and little chicks in the grass go crazy with joy, open their throats, spread out their wings, open their beaks and sing at the top of their voices . . . Song and praise on high, melody and harmony below. Suddenly two children, Feigele and I, barefoot, our shirts puffed up by the breeze, start out arm in arm from behind the house. They walk together, upright, keeping time, throats outstretched, heads back, mouths open, also singing at the top of their voice—yet without word or tune—just yelling at the top of their voices in company with all the creatures in the tree-tops of the forest; just singing

away, la la, la lala, and again la la, la lala! One great joy, divine joy, possessed them all, rivulets of water and birds and trees and grasses and splinters of grass and the two children, and swept them away in the multitude of its waves. One single gladness, the gladness of the whole world, was overhead, and they all cried out for the same reason, song and praise to Him who lives for ever . . . ("*Safiah*")⁵

It is a world where "all things and their fragments . . . combine to make a whole," where contraries exist side by side, and they all blend together—they do not cancel each other. In other words, in this world, opposites are not enemies, each balances the other, each completes the other, and what, to ordinary eyes, appear to be opposites are here shown to be two halves of a whole. Thus, in "*Aggadat Sh'loshah ve-Arbaah*" (The Legend of the Three and the Four), in another recreation of this world, the separated lovers are brought together through the combined efforts of the snake, which, in Bialik's symbolism represents the flesh, and the eagle, which represents the spirit.

"*Aggadat Sh'loshah ve-Arbaah*", a generally ignored work, and yet one to which Bialik assigned great importance, is also one of the rare instances in which all the problematics of his world come to a satisfactory conclusion. As frequently happens in legends and fantasies, the separated lovers come together despite all attempts to keep them apart. This legend, however, carries a specifically Bialikan stamp: it takes place on an island, and an island which has come to be the embodiment of Bialik's hidden world—remote, enclosed within itself, inaccessible. As always, it is fertile, moist, lush, teeming with life and vitality. Everything in it, not only the lovers, comes together in a harmonious and fruitful relationship, all things stream one toward the other, and the island stands witness to the great principle of love that Bialik sees active in the universe:

Not only man himself did God create male and female, but also the animal and the plant kingdoms—and inanimate matter too. All the foundations and forces of the universe, both visible and invisible, both near and far, both large and small, from heavenly hosts to dust, from every molecule of rain to the soul and vigor of everything—all of them did God create in pairs, male and female, and he planted in them the craving to cling to one another and be one. And when they are separated—they follow each other, pursuing and being pursued, they roam the world, they know no rest. This is the great, eternal love, the love of a mighty God, a universal love, the soul of everything that lives, its very life, a fire pent up in the universe with no place free of it and no limit to it. And when it bursts forth to reveal itself, it blazes for itself mysterious trails no man had ever expected, no man had ever dared hope for.

Love, therefore, for Bialik, is not solely between man and woman.

5. This and all subsequent quotations from "*Safiah*" are taken from *Aftergrowth, and Other Stories*, translated by I.M. Lask (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1939).

Taken in its largest connotation, it is a cosmic principle of joining and coupling, a force that makes for unity and wholeness. This becomes all the more evident when, in Bialik's world, exile is seen as the reverse of love. The prototypical experience of exile is the separation of realms that belong together. And, again, Bialik shows this not only as individual experience but as a cosmic experience. In "*ve-Im Yish'al ha-Mal'akh*" (And If the Angel Should Ask)—the poem that recounts his soul's progression from childhood, through exile, to roam the world, fragmented and incomplete, eternally praying for love—the flaw in himself corresponds to a flaw in the universe, which is seen as fragmented and incomplete and praying for love. Bialik's "*Megillat ha-Esh*" (The Scroll of Fire), also plays out the drama of exile on the cosmic, as well as the individual and national levels: the same catastrophe—the breaking apart of the channels between heaven and earth—takes place on all three. The world of "*Megillat ha-Esh*" is the reversal of the world of "*Aggadat Sh'loshah ve-Arbaah*". Where, in the first, things come together in a show of love and reconciliation, here they fly apart. For the entire length of the tale the hero oscillates between conflicting passions which he cannot reconcile, between the God of heaven and the God of earth: whenever he chooses one, he loses both. The island here is a desert, dry and barren. There is no real life in exile, Bialik shows, where realms are torn from one another, no life where one realm exists to the exclusion of the other. As both "*Aggadat Sh'loshah ve-Arbaah*" and "*Megillat ha-Esh*" show, the two realms have their origin in the divine and both are needed to produce life.

And so, what Bialik seeks is not some remembered eroticism permitted in childhood; he seeks the wholeness of childhood. He wants to overcome his fragmented condition, to complete himself. Physical union is certainly part of the quest, but it is not all of it. Bialik wants a whole life, the life that had its ultimate expression in the world of childhood, the world before the exile. He wants to see again the sights which are "now hid behind some curtain." In numerous ways, throughout his work, he expresses the wish to look behind the curtain (*pargod*), the mirror (*aspaklariah*)—both Kabbalistic terms for inaccessible knowledge—to enter not only the sealed garden of erotic pleasures, but the *pardes*, the orchard of mystic experience. Reaching for the "fiftieth gate,"⁶ the place "where the contraries are united at their root", "he suggests that exile is exile from the root, fragmentation is the result of distance from the source. Bialik's reaching is for the source. He wants to drink again from the pool of the forest, the holy of holies, to see the world again with vision which, as he described it in his remarkable "*Gilui ve-Khisui be-Lashon*" (Revelation and Concealment in Language), belongs to man "in his beginnings:" an immediate vision, with no division, taking in the world directly. Bialik's reaching for the other side of the fence is his reaching for

6. Subject of the poem "*Heziz va-Met*" (He Gazed and Died).

the other side of the wall of green reeds, not only for erotic union but for a sort of cosmic union: "for union with the world again through a new seeing, a first seeing."⁷

This is the quest that animates Bialik's world. The experience of exile from childhood into a broken and unredeemed adult world may not be unique; but what is unique in Bialik is his refusal to accept the state of exile as final. Nothing is as real to him as those early days:

It has been said that man sees and grasps truly only once in his life, during his childhood. Those first sights, virgin as when first they left the Creator's hands, are the embodiment of things, their very quintessence. What comes later is no more than a defective second edition. It is done after the fashion of the original, to be sure, and is faintly reminiscent of it, but it is not the same thing ("*Safiah*").

Or:

I know that only once does man drink from the golden cup
And a vision of glory and splendor will not come to him twice
That there is a blueness to the sky and a greenness to the grass
And a hidden light to the universe and a glory to all God's deeds
That are granted to a child only once—and never again.

"*Ehad Ehad u-v'Ein Roeh*" (One by One and All Unseen)

It is as if his childhood world, with its special radiance, still has the Creator's touch lingering on it; as if, in his beginnings, Bialik had come up against the raw powers of creation. This, in the final analysis, is the real content of his hidden world. It is a world oozing with life. As he shows in "*Aggadat Sh'loshah ve-Arbaah*", the purpose of all of the streaming together, all of the meeting and mating, is one: the creation of life.

It is the hand of God which, in mysterious ways, draws distant things together and joins those which are apart, in order to mix blood with blood and life with life, to fertilize God's vast acres and to make fruitful the whole universe, every day and every moment.

Bialik craves to return to it, not because it was pretty or pleasant, but because in it lies the paradigm of creation—the source of his life and of his own creativity. *Mekor Hayyim* he calls it—a source which created life in the beginning, which continues to impart life in the present. His past experience goes down deep into his memory, it is a constant which remains intact through all the vicissitudes of life, an added dimension to his life, his link with a transcendent realm. It is a dormant source of truth and light—in several of his poems it is translated into the legend of the sleeping princess who needs to be awakened—and his whole life is made up of repeated attempts to rediscover it and bring it back to life. When, periodically, he

7. From an essay about Sh. Ben-Tzion, in which Bialik discusses "the joy of existence" which seems to infect those artists and writers who, like himself, work in the post-Mendele Mokher Seforim period.

feels himself too much enmeshed in the ways of the caravans, too far removed from the source, when the powers of creation within him are dry—he is able to return to that past, to draw upon its life, and to rejuvenate himself.

Interestingly enough, and for all the conflicts postulated between Bialik the personal poet and Bialik the national poet—this idea of *Mekor Hayyim* forms the basis also of his national work. Writing during an interim period in the nation's history, after the Haskalah had destroyed the old religious bastions and before nationalism and Zionism had come to take their place, Bialik faces a torn, confused, and immobilized nation. In the darkest colors, he paints the “sterility, the lack of vigor, that permeates the life of a nation in exile, a nation whose body is in one world and its soul in another,”⁸ and he calls on the people to make this period of their history one of renewal—by returning to their past. This nation also began its life with divine revelation, an encounter which it nurtured as its constant through all the cycles of history. It is a past that contains the secret of the nation's creation, and the source of its own creativity: it is the people's hidden strength—in “*Meitei Midbar*” (The Dead of the Desert) Bialik describes it as the power that makes giants out of dwarfs—and the seed of their endurance. It is the seed which was planted in *ha-Matmid*, the seed which gave him his intensity, the seed which preserved the nation's life and carried it forward until the present day. But *ha-Matmid* will not sustain the nation in the modern secular world. It is time to give the seed planted within him new soil: to unite body and soul, to build the earthly Jerusalem as well as the celestial one. And Bialik calls on the people to awaken the giants sleeping in the desert, to return to the ancient land, to return to a creative life.

And so, a similar thread runs through Bialik's personal and national poetry: a quest for wholeness and life, which binds the end to the beginning. For Bialik, the poet of personal renewal, as well as for Bialik, the poet of the national renaissance, there is no going forward without going backward: the past holds the key to continuing life. For personal as well as for national renewal, it is necessary to eliminate everything that is withered and dry, to cultivate that which is firmly rooted, that which has come through the years moist and pulsing with life—and, perhaps, the old trunk will burst forth with a new flowering.

Where, then, is the conflict? Did Bialik wish to sing of Feigele and love while he was singing of Zion and Renaissance—as is not only Zemach's contention but is the leading opinion today? Even if that were the case, the foregoing remarks show that the songs were not so very different. And even a cursory look at some of the symbols involved will show that a great deal of parallelism exists between the personal and the national experiences. Thus, for example, the enclosed island, by consensus the encapsu-

8. The essay, *Mendelev-Shloshet ha-Krakhim* (Mendele and the Three Volumes).

lation of Bialik's private world, the extra dimension to his life, reappears in "*Meitei Midbar*" as the enclosed desert, the hidden dimension of the nation's life. The sleeping princess, the inner treasure, the inner source of light, whose golden light goes back to the world of childhood, finds her equivalent in the sleeping giants, the nation's treasury of hidden resources, whose power comes from long ago, from the nation's childhood. And so it goes. That one is dealing here with comparable experiences is incontrovertible—but there is more here than parallelism.

What is forgotten by those who separate the personal from the national aspects of Bialik's work, as if separating the essential from the trivial, is that at a certain point in his life Bialik drew from his nation what he had previously drawn from his childhood.

Exiled from childhood, from the holy of holies of the forest, Bialik later immersed himself in Torah. Again he felt the life of distant worlds and other times flowing into his soul, again he established a link to a transcendent realm, again he sensed a connection between himself and the universe. The wholeness and the sense of belonging, in other words, which Bialik experienced alone with God in the forest, he later recaptured in the society of men, by linking himself to what one generation had passed along to another. It was an attempt for him to return, in a new way, to the foundations of life that were glimpsed in the beginning. One cannot continue to separate Bialik's national from his personal self when, clearly, there was something in his nation's life that fed his own. The national aspect of his poetry was as authentic an expression of his inner world as was the personal. The nation's beginnings were his own, too, the nation's condition of exile was also his own, and, although it is still a debatable question whether he saw his own redemption in the nation's, it is questionable that he saw it apart from the nation's. It is doubtful, therefore, that Bialik sang his nation's songs with as much reluctance as is today ascribed to him, so that he sensed a conflict between his nation and his "real I," when the nation was part of his "real I." In doing his nation's work he was also doing his own.

The division that does exist in Bialik's life and work between the essential and the trivial, between an inner realm and an outer one, between "the gates of purity and impurity," is not between the personal and the national poet, but between Bialik when he feels himself attached to some life-giving source—be it God in the forest or the *Shekhinah* in the *Bet ha-Midrash*—and Bialik when he feels himself alone, in exile again, praying for love. It is between Bialik when he is in touch with other worlds and other times, feeling himself in a state of grace, and Bialik when he wallows in the world at hand, when the channels that lead to creation are blocked, when, one by one, he has lost his connections to life, when he fears that exile is, indeed, the final state, that he has lost not only contact with his *Mekor Hayyim* but the possibility of ever making contact again. Then, like the twig of "*Zanah Lo Zalzal*" (A Twig Dropped), he hangs limply on his

trunk, and though a new spring comes, for him there is no new flowering.

And yet, it is the whole tenor of Bialik's poetry that the experience of the past is also promise for the future; that, as long as man is alive, he has a chance to renew his link with his beginning, to experience a new flowering. "I have forgotten the paths to my God," he laments toward the end of his life in one of his most beautiful poems. And the poem ends:

But my heart predicts, and my soul knows for certain . . .
 That again I will stand spellbound before a pure and extraordinary world,
 A locked and sealed garden, strewn with riddles and marvels,
 No hand had ever touched them, no lips ever spoke of them,
 My heart will be filled to overflowing and the awe of God upon my face,
 In my eyes a tear will shine and in my heart a silent cheer.

Eḥad Eḥad u-v'Ein Roeh

The Breaking of the Tablets

NAHUM M. WALDMAN

THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE CAN BE ILLUMINATED from two directions. There is the tradition of interpretation, the versions, the Targumim, midrashim, and medieval commentators. On the other side of the historical spectrum, the literature of the ancient Near East clarifies much that is obscure. While it is generally thought that these two areas are unrelated and that the later exegesis contains much that is eisegesis, a reading in of later conceptions, there are situations where both directions of interpretation can help each other. We suggest that the story of the breaking of the tablets by Moses is such a case.

Exodus 32:1–14 tells us how God informs Moses of the sin of the people while he is on the mountain. Moses then pleads with God, invoking the memory and merits of the patriarchs, and “God renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon his people.” Exodus 32:15–33, however, tells a different story. When Moses descends from the mountain and is met by Joshua, they wonder at the kind of sound coming from the camp. When Moses draws near enough to see, he smashes the tablets, and grinds up the golden calf, scattering its dust upon the water and forcing the Israelites to drink. The Levites then kill three thousand people, but Moses, unsure that his previous efforts have turned away the wrath of God, says, “You have been guilty of a great sin. Yet will I go up to the Lord; perhaps I may win forgiveness for your sin” (Ex. 32:30). In his plea, Moses begs to be erased from God’s book and is answered that only he who has sinned will be erased (32:32–33).

Bible critics have not been unanimous on the unity of the chapter and have proposed various deletions of material which they consider to have been added.¹ We suggest, however, that a unitary approach to Ex. 32:15–35 is defensible and that the actions of Moses fit into a logical

1. S. R. Driver assigns most of the chapter to E, excepting only vv. 9–14. Likewise, Eissfeldt considers the chapter to derive from E, relegating only vv. 17–18 and 25–29 to another source which he calls L (Lay). Pfeiffer allows only vv. 5b, 6, 15–19a as E and treats the rest as post-Exilic. Noth assumes even greater disunity, maintaining that parts of the original story have been suppressed, such as the role of Aaron and the aftermath, and holds that the original story stressed the sin of the people, not that of Aaron. The punishment by the Levites is not continuous with the drinking of the “bitter waters,” and the two accounts are variants: S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1891; reprinted New York: Meridian, 1956), p. 38; Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, An Introduction* (New York and Evanston, Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 188–204; R. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1948), p. 170; M. Noth, *Exodus, A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), pp. 244–6.

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sequence. The section flows smoothly without any need to assume multiple authorship or textual interpolations. The purpose of Moses was to limit the severe wrath of God to the actual offenders and, thus, spare the people as a whole. He therefore smashes the tablets (his motives will be discussed below); destroys the source of the problem, leaving not a fragment; has the people drink water saturated with gold dust, either as a punishment or to identify the actual offenders by an ordeal; and hears the lame excuse of Aaron. He then realizes how deleterious Aaron's action has been, for the people are now out of control, in contrast to their discipline and unity when they stood before Sinai. He therefore orders a drastic punitive action, having the Levites annihilate three thousand people. But the Divine wrath is still unappeased, and Moses tries to win atonement by offering himself. We shall see, on the basis of the midrash and documents from the ancient Near East, on what grounds Moses claims that he deserves death.

The tablets were marvellous and of Divine origin (v. 16). Would Moses break them voluntarily? Would God approve of such an action? There are several well known answers in the midrashim. *Abot d'Rabbi Nathan* (A, ch. 2) counts this as one of several acts which Moses performed of his own accord and which were later found to concur with God's wishes. When Moses saw the terrible sin that the people had committed, he reasoned, "How can I give them the tablets? I will be binding them to severe obligations and making them liable to death at the hand of Heaven." The analogy is drawn between this case and that of a betrothed woman who committed adultery before the wedding. The king's emissary drew the inference that, if he gave her the marriage contract, she would be executed. *Exodus Rabbah* is more daring. A king was about to sign the death warrant of his own son, but the king's servant seized the pen from his hand. Thus, Moses pulled the tablets out of the hands of God in order to save Israel (*Exod. R.* 43:1). The act was a voluntary one, for Moses and the seventy elders became involved in a tug of war, but, with his superior strength, Moses pulled the tablets away from them (*Abot d'Rabbi Nathan*, A, ch. 2; *Midr. Tanhuma*, 'Equeb, 11).

Another strand of legend seeks to mitigate the boldness of Moses' act, again narrated in *Abot d'Rabbi Nathan*. Because of the sin, the lettering flew away from the tablets. Moses then said, "How can I give Israel worthless tablets? I will seize them and break them." A further development of this theme, however, makes the breaking beyond the control of Moses. The tablets, deprived of the writing, the living soul, became too heavy to hold (*Tanhuma*, Ibid.).

What is clear is that the breaking of the tablets has an intrinsic relationship to the covenant. Moses is trying to annul the obligations of the *berit* by obliterating the testimony, the tablets on which its terms are written. All this is in order to protect his people from the consequences of their having violated the covenant.

When we turn to the evidence from the ancient Near East we find many inscriptions invoking the direst curses upon anyone who removes, defaces, alters, or mutilates a royal inscription, a treaty-tablet, a boundary stone or a funerary inscription. In the latter case, a malediction is also directed against anyone who disturbs a body or robs a tomb. The curses, whether appearing in Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Aramean, or Phoenician documents, invariably include the eradication of the seed and posterity of the offender. (We are indebted to a number of writers who have demonstrated the influence of ancient treaties and covenants upon the covenant language of the Bible).²

The elements of a suzerain treaty, such as imposed by a Hittite monarch, which have left traces in the Bible, include the preamble, the historical survey, the stipulations, the provisions for deposit of the text and its periodic reading, the summoning of divine witnesses, and blessings and curses. Uffenheimer has noted that, in terms of the recognized practice of the ancient world, Moses was guilty of a capital crime in destroying the tablets, comparable to a royal inscription (God's writing) and to a treaty document.³

Let us sample some passages from the various types of literature. Sargon the Great (2371–2316 B.C.E.), in a characteristic formula, states: "May Shamash (the sun god) destroy the potency and make perish every offspring of whoever damages this inscription."⁴ Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.E.), in the epilogue to his code, says:

If that man did not heed my words which I wrote on my stela and disregarded my curses and did not fear the curses of the gods, but has abolished the law which I enacted, has distorted my words, has altered my statutes, effaced my name inscribed thereon and has written his own name, or has commissioned another because of these curses, as for that man, whether king or lord, or governor, or person of any rank . . .

Elaborate curses then follow.⁵ In a treaty between the Hittite king, Suppiluliumas (1375–1335 B.C.E.), and Mattiwaza of Mitanni we read: "Whoever will remove this tablet from before Tessub . . . and put it into a hidden place, if he breaks it or causes anyone else to change the wording of the tablet . . ."⁶ The various gods are invoked as witnesses, and a dire curse is pronounced.

2. G. E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955); D. J. McCarthy, S. J., *Treaty and Covenant*, *Analecta Biblica*, 21 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963); Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969); Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Benjamin Uffenheimer, *Ha-Nevu'ah Ha-Kedumah Be-Yisra'el* (Jerusalem, 1973), pp. 70-120.

3. B. Uffenheimer, *Ha-Nevu'ah Ha-Kedumah Be-Yisra'el*, p. 81.

4. James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd. ed. (Princeton, 1969), p. 267, (hereafter: *ANET*).

5. *ANET*, pp. 178-9.

6. *ANET*, pp. 205-6.

A Babylonian boundary stone (*kudurru*) is interesting because it describes a kind of total destruction, which reminds us of what Moses did to the golden calf:

Whoever removes this stone, hides it in the dust, burns it with fire, throws it into water, shuts it up in an enclosure, causes a fool, a deaf man, a witless man to take it, places it in an invisible place, may the great gods, as many as are mentioned by their names on this stone, curse him with an evil curse, tear out his foundation, and destroy his seed.⁷

Similar materials have also been found in Aramean and Phoenician inscriptions. Ronald Brauner has demonstrated that, in these inscriptions and in the Bible, there is an important correlation between the offense and the penalty, *middah keneged middah*, "measure for measure. This is expressed by the language of the curses."⁸ As we shall see, this principle is essential for the understanding of Moses' request to be erased from the book that God has written.

In the Aramaic treaty inscriptions from Sefire (around 750 B.C.E.) we read:

But whoever does not observe the inscription on this stele but says "I shall efface some of its words, or I shall upset the good things and put down evil ones," on the day he will do so, that man and his house and all that is in it shall be upset by the gods, and he (*his house*) be turned upside down, and that man shall not acquire a name.⁹

Note that the word for "inscription" is *sifra*. The Kilamua inscription, written in Phoenician and emanating from Zinjirli in northwest Syria in the second half of the ninth century B.C.E., has:

He who smashes this inscription, may his head be smashed by Ba'l-Samad who belongs to Gabbar, and may his head be smashed by Ba'l Hamman who belongs to Bmh, and by Rakabel, the lord of the dynasty.¹⁰

The word for "inscription" is again *sfr*. The Phoenician inscription of Azitawadda, dating perhaps from the eighth century B.C.E. and found in Karatepe, invokes curses upon any king, prince, or man who shall wipe out the name (*ymḥ šm*) of Azitawadda from the gate.¹¹

Let us return to the plea of Moses, "Erase me from the book which

7. W. J. Hincke, *A New Boundary Stone of Nebuchadrezzar* (Philadelphia, 1907) I, p. 152; IV, p. 28; V, p. 7. On *kudurru*-stones, see A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago and London, 1964), pp. 286-7.

8. Ronald A. Brauner, "Some Aspects of Offense and Penalty in the Bible and the Literature of the Ancient Near East," *Gratz College Annual*, S. Lachs and I. David Passow, eds. (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 9-18. Compare Gen. 3:17-19; Num. 35:31-33; Deut. 19:18-21.

9. *ANET*, p. 660. For the originals, see H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962-4) I, pp. 43-44 (hereafter: *KAI*).

10. *ANET*, pp. 654-5; *KAI*, I, pp. 4-5.

11. *ANET*, pp. 653-4; *KAI*, I, pp. 5-6.

you have written" (Ex. 32:32). The rendering of *sefer* by "book" is not the only possible one. The word can mean "message" (2 Kings 5:5, 20:12), "legal document, bill" (Jer. 32:11, 16; Deut. 24:1, 3) or "record of a covenant" (Ex. 24:7). Moses' request for death may be no more than an expression of despair, witness his plea in Num. 11:15 and Elijah's in 1 Kings 19:4. The book here can be the "book of life," which is referred to in Isa. 4:3 and Ps. 69:29. The commentators have understood the word in our passage in various ways. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan renders it "the book of the righteous," Rashbam, Ramban, and Abarbanel interpret it as "the book of life," Rashi as "the book of the Torah," and Ibn Ezra as "the book of the heavens," that is, the stars which influence human destiny.

Even if we accept that the book is the book of life or the lists of the living, we suggest that there is allusion to other meanings in Moses' use of the term. While it is not stated specifically that Moses has erased God's book, that is, the royal-Divine covenant-document (*sefer*), he, indeed, has. By the principle of "measure for measure," pointed out by Brauner, this erasure requires the erasure of Moses himself. The penalty of being erased (*mhh*) from the book/record (*sefer*) is the result of an erasing. We may accept the view of the midrash that Moses destroyed the tablets deliberately, or we may follow Ramban on 32:16, who believes that what Moses did was not calculated; it was the result of uncontrolled passion. The important fact is that, at this point, Moses takes advantage of this act of breaking as his final and most desperate effort to spare the children of Israel. He seizes upon his offense and offers himself as the atonement for his people. A parallel case where those who are not guilty offer themselves and are refused, as is Moses, is found in Gen. 44:16–17.

To return for a moment from the ancient Near East to the midrash, we find that this is the interpretation of *Exodus Rabbah* (41:1):

He saw that Israel cannot stand, so he joined his soul to theirs and broke the tablets, saying to the Holy One, Blessed Be He: "They sinned, and I sinned, in that I broke the tablets. If you forgive them, forgive me too. If you do not forgive them, do not forgive me, but erase me from the book which you have written."¹²

Moses' offering of himself to be erased from the book because he has mutilated and destroyed a *sefer*, a covenant document, is the final step. Prior to this he has attempted to avert the catastrophe by other means. The grinding up of the calf is a total destruction, comparable to 'Anat's treatment of Mot in the Canaanite epic¹³ and to the annihilation that the inscriptions warn against. The drinking of the gold dust and water has been compared by ancient and modern commentators to the "bitter

12. See the discussion in Nechama Leibowitz, *Iyyunim Hādashim Be-Sefer Shemot*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 395–435.

13. F. C. Fensham, "The Burning of the Golden Calf and Ugarit," *Israel Exploration Journal*, 16 (1966): 191–3; C. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome, 1965), No. 49, pp. ii, 30–35; *ANET*, p. 140.

waters" of Numbers, ch. 5: the ordeal would identify the actual offenders, the Levites would know whom to kill, and the rest of the people would be spared.¹⁴ A parallel to this, based on the ancient concept that a curse or an evil force can be absorbed physically, is seen in Ps. 109:17–18, and in a passage from the *Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon*: "Just as bread and wine enter into the intestines, so may they cause this curse to enter into your intestines and into those of your sons and daughters."¹⁵

Clearly, these early efforts, even the killing of three thousand Israelites by the Levites, do not suffice. The sin of idolatry is not easily disposed of; (compare Ex. 20:4, where God visits the guilt [of worshipping idols] unto the fourth generation). Moses, realizing the great danger, says to the people: "You have been guilty of a great sin. Yet will I now go up to the Lord; *perhaps* I may win forgiveness for your sin" (Ex. 32:30). This is the introduction to the dialogue in which Moses offers his own life for his people.

The Zohar (*Vayyera*², p. 106) appropriately declares: "There was no one who protected his generation like Moses, for he was the faithful shepherd (*ra'ya*² *mehemna*³).

14. *Tosef. 'Avodah Zarah* III (IV):19; M. Zuckerman, ed., *Tosefta* (Pasewalk, 1880) p. 465; *Talmud Bavli 'Avodah Zarah* 44a; *Midr. Tanhuma*², *Tissa*², 26; *Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 63; Rashi, Rashbam, Ramban, Ibn Ezra on Ex. 32:20; U. Cassuto, *Perush 'al Sefer Shemot* (Jerusalem, 1954), p. 293.

15. D. J. Wiseman, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon," *Iraq* 20 (1958), lines 410–13; see, also, 560–2; *ANET*, pp. 534–41.

*The Philosophical Character of Maimonides' Guide—A Critique of Strauss' Interpretation**

JOSEPH A. BUIJS

IS MAIMONIDES' *THE GUIDE OF THE Perplexed* a philosophical book or not? Modern scholars have generally conceded that it is.¹ But Leo Strauss has recently cast doubt on that view, arguing instead that the *Guide* can be properly understood only when the contemporary reader recognizes it to be a Jewish book.² Strauss does not, of course, deny the obvious use of a philosophical method, nor the interspersed discussions of acknowledged philosophical topics, throughout the *Guide*. What he does deny is that the *Guide's* general content, its scope and purpose, can be appropriately viewed as being philosophical. If he is right, then comprehension of the *Guide* is limited to a restricted, Jewish audience. For, unless the contemporary reader were to adopt the point of view that Strauss' Jewish interpretation implies, he would run the risk of misrepresenting the *Guide's* content, interpreting it in a way that is both contrary to its underlying presuppositions and alien to Maimonides' intentions. This risk would apply in particular to specific issues, especially when these are extracted from the broader context of the *Guide*.³

* I indicate within parentheses references to *The Guide of the Perplexed*: the book in Roman numerals and the chapter in Arabic numerals. Direct quotations are taken from the translation by Shlomo Pines (Chicago: Chicago U. Press, 1963).

1. Typical of this view is the laudatory comment of Alexander Marx: "The *Guide of the Perplexed* is the greatest philosophic book produced in Judaism" ("Moses Maimonides," *Maimonides Octocentennial Series II* [N.Y.: Maimonides Octocentennial Committee, 1935], p. 24). Julius Guttman similarly remarks about the *Guide's* achievement that it made "Maimonides the leading philosophical figure of the late Jewish Middle Ages" (*Philosophies of Judaism*, trans. David W. Silverman [N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964], p. 152).

2. Cf. his "The Literary Character of the *Guide for the Perplexed*," in *Essays on Maimonides, An Octocentennial Volume*, ed. Salo Wittmayer Baron (N.Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1941), pp. 37-91; and his "How to Begin to Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*," Introductory Essay to the *Guide*, pp. xi-lxi. In another study, Strauss contends that Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, at least in its first book, is more philosophical than the *Guide* because it begins with philosophy and turns to the Torah. By implication, he suggests that the *Guide* neither begins nor ends with philosophy. Cf. Strauss, "Notes on Maimonides' Book of Knowledge," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion*, ed. Ephraim E. Urbach et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), pp. 269-283.

3. A recent discussion illustrates this point; cf. Norbert Samuelson, "On Knowing God: Maimonides, Gersonides, and the Philosophy of Religion," *JUDAISM*, XVIII (1969): 64-77, and Shubert Spero, "Is the God of Maimonides Truly Unknowable?" *JUDAISM*, XXII (1973): 66-78. Samuelson argues that Maimonides mistakenly seeks to identify the God of the philosophers with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whereas Spero defends

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I believe that Strauss is too restrictive in his interpretation. Admittedly, the *Guide* is not a simple book. But it is not as intransigent and inaccessible to a contemporary reader—particularly a philosopher, be he Jewish or not—as Strauss suggests. Although the *Guide* is, historically, a Jewish book in that it was written by a Jew and explicitly for Jews, that fact need not, nor does it, preclude its being also a philosophical one in its fundamental scope and purpose.

Strauss' interpretation hinges basically on two arguments. One is that Maimonides cannot be viewed as a philosopher nor the *Guide* as a philosophical book, because, for Maimonides, there is an incompatibility between being a Jew and being a philosopher and, on fundamental issues, he chooses the former as against the latter. The other is that the *Guide*'s proper subject matter is an explanation of prophetic and Scriptural secrets and, therefore, does not, nor does it intend to, deal with any philosophical topic as such.

In his article, "The Literary Character of the *Guide for the Perplexed*," Strauss focuses on the science with which the *Guide* purportedly deals. Maimonides himself states that this is "the science of Law in its true sense" (I, Intro.). Plausibly enough, Strauss compares this science to Islamic *kalām*, since Maimonides identifies the *mutakallimūn* as students of the foundations or roots of religion (I, 71), which is also the subject matter of a true science of the Law in Maimonides' sense (I, Gen. Intro., 71; II, 2; III, 51, 54). Maimonides, however, persistently disagrees with the basic premises and methods of the *mutakallimūn* (I, 71). Nevertheless, he seems to be in agreement with them on at least one point—their intention to defend religious beliefs, especially against the rational criticisms of the *falāsifah*. The prime example of this, Strauss notes, is Maimonides' "defense of the principal root of the law, the belief in creation, against the contention of the philosophers that the visible world is eternal."⁴ Thus, although Maimonides starts from evident propositions that are true in accordance with the way things are, rather than, as do the *mutakallimūn*, from arbitrarily chosen ones that facilitate demonstrations of religious beliefs, Maimonides' enlightened *kalām*, according to Strauss, shares with the Islamic *kalām* proper the intention of opposing the opinions of philosophers when these conflict with religious doctrine. Since Maimonides views philosophy as virtually identical with the teachings of Aristotle and of the Aristotelians, he is, therefore, opposed to philosophy and philosophers in this restricted sense. From this Strauss concludes:

And what [Maimonides] opposes to the wrong opinions of *the* philosophers is not a true philosophy, and in particular not a religious philosophy, or a philosophy of religion, but "our opinion, i.e., the opinion of our law," or the

this identity. But, if Maimonides intends to concern himself with the religious conception of God, to the exclusion of the philosophical conception, then both interpretations are misguided.

4. Strauss, "Literary Character," p. 39.

opinion of "us, the community of the adherents of the law," or the opinions of the "followers of the law of our teacher Moses." He obviously assumes that the philosophers form a group distinguished from the group of adherents of the law and that *both groups are mutually exclusive*. Since he himself is an adherent of the law, he cannot possibly be a philosopher, and consequently a book of his in which he explains his views concerning all important topics cannot possibly be a philosophic book (II, 15, 21, 26; III, 17, 20, 21).⁵

The claim that Maimonides does not advance a religious philosophy or a philosophy of religion I discuss below. What is evidently central to Strauss' argument here is a presumed mutually exclusive distinction between being a Jew and being a philosopher, at least in the limited sense of being a follower of Aristotle.

In his other article, "How to Begin to Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*," Strauss once more attributes this incompatibility to Maimonides, but without its Aristotelian restriction. He claims, moreover, that this incompatibility constitutes a fundamental premise to an understanding of the *Guide*. His reason is that

Philosophers are men who try to give an account of the whole by starting from what is always accessible to man as man; Maimonides starts from the acceptance of the Torah. A Jew may make use of philosophy and Maimonides makes the most ample use of it; but as a Jew he gives his assent where as a philosopher he would suspend his assent (cf. II, 16).⁶

There is no objection to Strauss' characterization of a philosopher. But does Maimonides espouse the mutually exclusive distinction that Strauss requires for his Jewish interpretation?

In the first place, if, for Maimonides, being a Jew and being a philosopher are incompatible, one needs to explain his repeated emphasis on philosophy throughout the *Guide*. To be sure, Maimonides intends to uphold the religious beliefs of Judaism, as he does in the case of the belief in a purposeful creation of the world (II, 16). He explicitly addresses the *Guide* to Jews confirmed in their religious beliefs. Yet he also addresses it specifically to those Jews acquainted with the philosophical sciences, purportedly in order to remove the perplexity which they encounter from a conflict between religious tenets based on prophetic authority, on the one hand, and philosophical teaching based on rational demonstrations, on the other (I, Intro.). Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of the philosophical sciences, as he knew them, not only for intellectual development in general, but, also, for the knowledge of God in particular (I, Intro., 33, 34, 55; III, 51, 54). But if, in the end, the issues central to Judaism are already decided, so to speak, in favour of religious assent, why does Maimonides nevertheless insist on prerequisites that promi-

5. Ibid., pp. 41–42 (My emphasis).

6. Strauss, "How to Study," p. xiv.

nently include the philosophical sciences? The response that this is merely propaedeutic will not do, since it fails to consider specifically *how* and *to what extent* Maimonides uses philosophy in relation to religion and his acceptance of the Torah. That use, as I argue below, is not merely propaedeutic but integral to the *Guide's* scope and purpose.

Secondly, in order to maintain the distinction in question as an exclusive one, Strauss must admit that Maimonides gives his assent to Scriptural teachings *in spite of* philosophical considerations. But this cannot be maintained.

On the issue of creation in time versus the eternity of the world—which Strauss claims to be the decisive one—Maimonides does, indeed, adopt a belief in the former because it is taught in Scriptures. But he opts for the Scriptural teaching only after he has critically considered the arguments for both alternatives and has found them demonstratively inconclusive. He argues that creation in time is at least a logical possibility, since its opposite, the eternity of the world, has not been demonstrated (I, 71; II, 16).⁷ In fact, he lessens the impression of disagreement with Aristotle on this issue by claiming that the latter did not intend to demonstrate the eternity of the world (II, Intro., 15). By “demonstration” here he means an incontrovertible proof, based on self-evident premises that entail indubitable conclusions (I, 71; II, 3, 15).⁸ Since both opinions lack a demonstration in this sense, there is at least no reason to reject the literal teachings of Scriptures on the origin of the world. Had it been otherwise, Maimonides says, he would have reinterpreted figuratively the Scriptural texts about creation, just as he reinterprets figuratively the Scriptural texts about God's corporeality, because the denial of God's corporeality has been demonstrated (II, 25). But he gives some rational support, nevertheless, to the belief in creation in time by arguing that it is less doubtful than the belief in the world's eternity because of the former's coherence with a number of other beliefs about the nature of God, man and the world (II, 19, 22, 23, 25).

What is actually at issue in this dispute is which view is compatible with a belief in divine purpose and will. The belief in creation in time clearly implies a creator and, hence, is compatible with a divine will and purpose, while the belief in the world's eternity is held to imply, on its Aristotelian conception, that the process of generation and corruption proceeds by a continuous causal necessity. As this could misleadingly be understood to

7. Actually, Maimonides lists three opinions: (i) the Jewish belief in the world's creation in time from nothing; (ii) the belief in the co-eternity of matter with God, which he attributes to Plato; and (iii) the Aristotelian belief in the eternity of time and motion (II, 13). Since (iii) entails that the process of generation and corruption is itself eternal, while (i) and (ii) do not, (iii) is contradictory to both (i) and (ii).

8. He contrasts demonstrations (*burhān*) with proofs (*dalīl*) and uses the latter in connection with both creation in time and the eternity of the world (I, 71, 75, 76; II, 3, 15). For a clarification of this distinction and the requisites of a demonstration cf. his *Treatise on Logic*, trans. Israel Efros (N.Y.: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1938), ch. 7, pp. 41–47.

exclude a divine purpose and the possibility of divine intervention in the world—both of which are central to Judaism—Maimonides adopts the belief in creation in time. Here Strauss might reassert that Maimonides sides with the adherents of the Law against the philosophers. But, even on this issue, Maimonides notes that the world's eternity need not logically preclude a divine purpose and will, so that even if this belief were undeniably true, it need not be incompatible with a basic Jewish belief (II, 19, 22). Since the belief in the world's eternity is not undeniably true and since it raises numerous problematic questions, it is more reasonable, Maimonides suggests, to accept the belief in creation in time with its obvious implication of a belief in a divine purpose and will.

On the question of divine purpose, as on the question of creation in time, Maimonides allows his faith to be guided by reason. In other words, reason may not be *sufficient*, but it is at least *necessary*, to establish the fundamental beliefs of Judaism. Rather than giving his assent *in spite of* philosophical considerations, as Strauss would have us believe, Maimonides gives his assent only *in accordance with* them. But this surely is not an indication of a mutually exclusive distinction between being a Jew and being a philosopher, between assenting to faith and following reason.

Strauss' first argument rests on a questionable premise. His second argument is equally problematic.

As already stated, Maimonides concerns himself in the *Guide* with a true science of the Law. The contents of this science are expressed in Scriptural and Rabbinic teachings but are couched in figurative and parabolic terms because they are secrets whose meaning cannot be made accessible to all (I, Intro., 33; III, Intro.). However, since such secret teachings concern the very foundations or roots of Judaism, they are important to a Jew who is seriously intent, not only on practicing, but on understanding his religion. Furthermore, Maimonides recognizes the perplexity that would be encountered by a religious Jew, educated in the secular sciences, in attempting to unravel the "internal" or figurative meaning of these secret teachings from their "external" or literal one (I, Intro.). Thus, he undertakes to remove this perplexity by at least providing the means of understanding Scriptural and Rabbinic secrets within the intellectual capabilities of a select audience (Epistle Ded.; I, Intro.). The two most important secrets, he notes, are *ma'aseh bereshit*, the Account of the Beginning, and *ma'aseh merkabah*, the Account of the Chariot (I, Intro.; II, 2, 29; III, Intro.).

Since a true science of the Law amounts to an explanation of prophetic secrets and since this is admittedly the principal subject matter of the *Guide*, Strauss wonders whether it includes any philosophical topic as such. He appeals to Maimonides' classification of philosophy into theoretical and practical parts. Following Aristotle, the former is subdivided into mathematics, physics and metaphysics; the latter into ethics, economics,

government of the city and government of the great nation (or nations).⁹ Now, the only philosophical topics that might be included in the subject matter of the *Guide* are those relating to physics and metaphysics, since the *Guide* obviously does not deal with mathematics, economics or political science of either kind nor, by Maimonides' own admission, with ethical matters (III, 8). Maimonides asserts, however, that "the *Account of the Beginning* is identical with natural science [physics], and the *Account of the Chariot* with divine science [metaphysics]" (I, Intro.) Yet he also explicitly dismisses from the scope of the *Guide* those physical and metaphysical topics adequately treated by the philosophers (II, 2). Consequently, only the doctrine of God, which is extensively discussed, remains as a possible philosophical topic. But Maimonides admits that the existence, unity and incorporeality of God, to which he devotes most of his discussion on God, were adequately demonstrated by the philosophers. These three tenets, therefore, do not belong to the prophetic secrets that Maimonides wants to explain. Consequently, Strauss concludes that "no philosophic topic of any kind is, as such, the subject matter of the *Guide*."¹⁰

Here the difficulty arises of how one is to interpret Maimonides' explicit identification of the two most important Scriptural secrets with the two principal domains of (Aristotelian) philosophy. On this point, Strauss most noticeably diverges from the traditional interpretation of the *Guide*'s general scope and purpose. Taken quite literally, Maimonides' identification substantiates the generally accepted view that Maimonides seeks to reconcile Judaism with philosophy and that, therefore, the *Guide* is eminently philosophical. Strauss correctly contends that Maimonides' intention is not to treat of physics and metaphysics as such, entirely for their own sake. Rather, he claims, it is

to prove the identity, which to begin with was asserted only of *ma'aseh bereshit* with physics and of *ma'aseh merkabah* with metaphysics; . . . to show that the teaching of these philosophical disciplines, which is presupposed, is identical with the secret teaching of the Bible.¹¹ [And Strauss continues] The demonstration of such identity is no longer the duty of the philosophers, but is incumbent upon the student of the true science of the law.¹²

Why is this demonstration not the duty of a philosopher? Why is a student of the true science of the Law not also a philosopher? If the role of the philosopher and that of the student of the Law were clearly disparate, as Strauss assumes, then he might be right. But, as I argued above, this assumption cannot be attributed to Maimonides. And, as I will clarify below, the roles of the philosopher and of the student of the Law *qua* seekers of truth coincide. For, although both may arrive at truth by means of different sources, they cannot, in principle, be in disagreement. Any

9. Cf. *Ibid.*, ch. 14, pp. 61–65.

10. Strauss, "Literary Character," p. 43.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

12. *Ibid.*

differences between a philosopher and a student of the Law must be due to other, perhaps practical, considerations. Moreover, both are governed by the same logical principles of demonstration. Maimonides' objection to the *mutakallimūn* is precisely that their methods are not demonstrative in the sense of being rationally convincing and grounded on true premises (I, 71). Therefore, even if Maimonides' intention is to demonstrate the identity in question and Strauss means by "demonstration" what Maimonides would understand by this term, then Maimonides is, indeed, engaged in philosophy. Not only is the method, but also the subject matter, of the *Guide* one which falls within the realm of philosophy. Demonstrations require valid inferences and indubitably true premises. These requisites, according to Maimonides, invariably involve one in various philosophical disciplines. This may not amount to a discussion of philosophical topics as such, as Strauss would want, but it is, nevertheless, philosophical and integral to the scope and purpose of the *Guide*.

In his later article, "How to Begin to Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*," Strauss offers a slightly different interpretation of the same issue. Here he distinguishes a public and speculative teaching from a secret and exegetical teaching in the *Guide*. Because of Jewish legal proscriptions that restrict the revelation of prophetic secrets—of which Maimonides was well aware (I, Intro., 33, 71; III, Intro.)—Maimonides intentionally uses literary devices, such as contradictory and contrary claims, to conceal his explanations from the general public and common Jewish believer. What unites the secret exegetical parts with the public speculative parts of the *Guide*? If it is thought that speculation demonstrates the foundations of the Law, then, Strauss contends, speculation should precede exegesis, which is obviously not the order in the *Guide*. If it is maintained that exegesis deals with the same subject matter as that public teaching which is demonstrated by speculation, then, Strauss claims, there is no reason to consider the exegesis a secret teaching. Why, then, does Maimonides explicitly identify one with the other? To this question Strauss now responds:

What [Maimonides] means by identifying the core of philosophy (natural science and divine science) with the highest secrets of the Law (the Account of the Beginning and the Account of the Chariot) and therewith by somehow identifying the subject matter of speculation with the subject matter of exegesis may be said to be *the secret par excellence of the Guide*.¹³

To speak of "the secrets of the *Guide*" is consistent with Strauss' view that the *Guide* is modelled on the Scriptures.¹⁴ Since the Scriptures, by their metaphorical language and parabolic narratives, conceal certain teachings, so that they are accessible only in part and to a few, they contain esoteric doctrines. Since the *Guide* is devoted to an explanation of these

13. Strauss, "How to Study," pp. xvi–xvii (My emphasis).

14. Cf. Strauss, "Literary Character," pp. 45–53.

secret teachings and abides by the legal proscriptions surrounding their explanations, it, too, Strauss concludes, is esoteric in its teachings. But this view poses a serious problem for any one seeking to understand the *Guide*, especially in those instances in which Maimonides apparently contradicts himself intentionally to conceal his real meaning from the common believer. Yet one cannot but take Maimonides seriously when he says that "The diction of this Treatise has not been chosen at haphazard, but with great exactness and exceeding precision, and with care to avoid failing to explain any obscure point" (I, Instruction). Now, with respect to the asserted identity of the Account of the Beginning with physics and the Account of the Chariot with metaphysics, Maimonides would have left an obscure point unexplained, if one were to adopt Strauss' view that what this identity means to assert is a secret of the *Guide*.

While conceding that Maimonides does not intend to treat of physics and metaphysics as such, there seems to be no reason to refuse to take him literally here, as scholars have usually done. Moreover, Maimonides explicitly admits that he has mentioned this identity in the *Mishneh Torah*, his legal Code (I, Intro.). But that work, on Maimonides' admission, was written for the general Jewish public and, therefore, presumably contains a public teaching (I, Intro.).¹⁵ Is one to conclude, rather implausibly, that what was expressed in his Code as a public teaching is now, as explicitly stated in the *Guide*, a secret teaching? Even so, Maimonides cautions against a precipitous introduction to philosophical speculation without suitable abilities and prerequisites, for that may lead to confusion about, and ultimately rejection of, one's religion (I, 33, 34, 36, 60). This implies, however, that the philosophical sciences, claimed to be identical in content and truth with the prophetic secrets, should not, like these secrets, be divulged randomly and openly to the general public.

Strauss might object to my critique of his arguments by claiming that they rely on the explicit statements of Maimonides, which cannot be an accurate gauge of the latter's real intentions because Maimonides is revealing prophetic secrets while at the same time concealing them from the general public. Strauss might even suggest, in particular, that Maimonides' claim to an exact choice of words is itself problematic and its interpretation perhaps a secret of the *Guide*. But that would virtually close the book to any understanding, in its general scope as well as in particular details. If Strauss does mean this, then how could Maimonides even seriously propose to guide his readers through their perplexity? To claim, for example, that (i) the *Guide* is entirely written with precision but that (ii) the real meaning of its specific claims is also concealed would embroil Maimonides in an untenable situation. Yet this is what an interpreter of the *Guide* would encounter if he were to follow the implications of Strauss' interpretation.

15. Cf. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, in *A Maimonides Reader*, ed. Isadore Twersky (N.Y.: Behrman House, 1972), Intro., pp. 39–40 and Bk. I: Knowledge, p. 47.

What, more precisely, is the general character of the *Guide*? It can plausibly be viewed as an attempt to present a systematic philosophy of Judaism or of religion. Strauss denies this, presumably because philosophy of religion does not fall within Maimonides' classification of philosophy and, hence, was unknown to him.¹⁶ But, while the term "philosophy of religion" was not current in medieval times and while it is not incorporated into the Aristotelian classification of philosophy that Maimonides accepted, by and large, there is ample textual evidence in the *Guide* to substantiate the interpretation that Maimonides does, indeed, intend to present a philosophy of religion or, specifically, a philosophy of Judaism.

First, Maimonides signals a theoretical intent, on the one hand, by addressing a select type of reader who is cognizant of the philosophical sciences (Epistle Ded.; I, Intro.) and, on the other, by his contrasting a true science of the Law with a legalistic study and excluding the latter from the scope of the *Guide*. A legalistic study of the Law, dealing with religious, moral and social prescriptions incumbent upon Jewish adherents (III, 54), must be comprehensible to all, since all Jews are obligated to adhere to them in their daily lives. But a true science of the Law, dealing with its foundations and, consequently, a justification of its practical implications, is not comprehensible to all Jewish believers alike, since it requires a suitable preparation and intellectual development which they could not all be expected to have (I, Intro., 33–35).

Secondly, he indicates his religious intent, not only by the individual topics that are discussed, but by a unity of concerns expressed in the first and last chapters of the *Guide*. While the first introduces the two main themes of any theistic religion, namely, God and man, and initiates an explication of the proper concept of God, the last focuses on the natural end of man and his religious comportment as a result of his relationship to, and knowledge of, God.¹⁷

What unites these two aspects into a common objective is Maimonides' persistent quest for truth. This is evidenced by his repeated insistence on "intellectual beliefs," "intellectual apprehensions," apprehensions of "the true reality" of things, and of "the true essences of things," especially in connection with a knowledge of God as the basis of worship (I, Intro., 43, 57, 59; III, 51, 52, 54). These contrast with the false, "imaginary beliefs" on which, according to Maimonides, the *mutakallimūn* base their religious doctrines (I, 71). Intellectual beliefs result in knowledge, if they are indubitably true on the grounds of being self-evidently or demonstratively so (I, 50, 51). Implicit here is a unitary conception of beliefs and truth. Whether they originate from the Scriptures or from the philosophical sciences, beliefs are true in so far as apprehensions correspond to reality (I, 50). But, while the common believer accepts the truth

16. Cf. the quotation cited above, p. 450.

17. Cf. Samuel Atlas, "The Contemporary Relevance of the Philosophy of Maimonides," *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook*, LXIV (1954), pp. 201–202.

of Scriptural claims on the basis of tradition by way of prophetic authority, Maimonides accords a priority to the acceptance of truth on the basis of reason or demonstration (III, 51, 54). And this superior acceptance, as previously noted, relies on logic, physics and metaphysics in their Aristotelian conception, for the first involves the principles of demonstration and the latter two, speculative truths about reality.

By admitting a superiority of philosophical knowledge based on demonstration over traditional knowledge based on prophecy, Maimonides does not minimize the importance of revelation and faith. The Scriptures, the textual source of revelation and faith, derive from prophecy and this, like reason in philosophy, is, according to him, a source of knowledge and truth (I, Intro., 35; III, 24).¹⁸ But in so far as either kind of knowledge entails truth, the claims of prophecy and those of philosophy cannot in principle contradict each other, because, if different sources of truth were, in fact, to establish conflicting truths, the notion of truth itself would become incoherent. Rather than either subjugating faith to reason or reason to faith, Maimonides puts them on an equal footing.¹⁹ Apparent conflict between them arises only as a result of difficulties of interpretation; in respect of truth, they converge. Prophets couch what has been revealed to them in figurative terms, because their claims, having a practical as well as a theoretical objective, must be accessible to all. They appeal, therefore, to the imagination, rather than the intellect, of the common believer (I, 26, 33; II, 43, 47). But it is men of speculation, or philosophers, in Maimonides' sense of the term, who are capable of interpreting and, hence, of understanding, the true meaning of these claims (I, 33; III, Intro., 54).

In summary, the *Guide* is essentially devoted to religion, to Judaism. In this sense it is a Jewish book. But it is also undeniable that Maimonides' approach is fundamentally theoretical, and this is the basis for calling the *Guide* a philosophical book. His prime concern lies with the foundations or roots of his religion. While these are initially given in prophecy, Maimonides seeks to aid his select readership in their comprehension and justification of these foundations. And this task invariably involves one in philosophy—not only as a pedagogical tool but, also, as an element integral to the task itself. Consequently, Maimonides can be said to provide a philosophy of religion or a philosophy of Judaism. Contrary to Strauss' implications, the *Guide*, in its general scope and purpose, is accessible to a contemporary philosopher, Jewish or not, for one can surely understand the claims of a religion and assess their purported justifications without espousing that religion's practice and underlying presuppositions.

18. Cf., especially, his *Treatise on Logic*, ch. 8, p. 47; and his "Letter on Astrology," in *A Maimonides Reader*, p. 465.

19. For a development of this relationship cf. Isaac Franck, "Maimonides' Philosophy Today," *JUDAISM*, IV (1955): 104–109.

Death and Man's Fear of Death in Franz Rosenzweig's The Star of Redemption

MICHAEL D. OPPENHEIM

NAHUM GLATZER, IN THE FOREWORD TO THE English translation of Franz Rosenzweig's, *The Star of Redemption*, writes that the famous introductory paragraphs, including those written by Rosenzweig under the heading "Concerning Death," were added at a very late stage in the preparation of the manuscript.¹ He suggests that the many commentators who have taken these paragraphs as a key to the very complex book may have grasped onto something peripheral rather than something central. Similarly, he points out that the last paragraph of the *Star*, which ends with the words "into life," was decided upon only at a late stage. The goal of this paper is to indicate that this textual analysis leads us in the wrong direction. The theme of death is omnipresent in the *Star*, weaving itself throughout the intricacies of Rosenzweig's book, and is firmly tied to the major foci of Rosenzweig's endeavor: the critique of philosophy, the analysis of the nature of man both before and after his contact with God, the description of the religious man's life before God and his life with other men, and, finally, God's activities as Revealer and Redeemer.

However, there is a need to look once again at Glatzer's analysis of Rosenzweig's manuscripts before we commence the investigation of the theme of death in the *Star*. A brief reflection on the art of writing might allay some fears that, even when the philosophical demonstration in this paper has been completed, Glatzer's comment will remain unanswered. Many authors can probably draw upon their own experiences to reach a different conclusion concerning Rosenzweig's act of completing his work. It often happens that an introduction is the last written piece in a manuscript mosaic. It is only after the author works through the whole book that persistent themes become fully clear (or are, as it were, forced upon him) and he gains the power to write—with one quick and bold stroke—a few words that truly set the tone for all that follows. After reading the mosaic of chapters and books that make up Rosenzweig's work, it is not hard to visualize this process taking place in his mind, when, at the end, he gives the *Star* its unique and powerful frame, beginning with words about death and ending with "into life."

1. Foreword to Franz Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption*, trans. by William Hallo (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. xvii. Quotations and footnotes refer to this English edition, which will hereafter be cited as *Star*.

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The major element in the critique of philosophy which comprises much of Part I of *The Star of Redemption* is Rosenzweig's treatment of man's fear of death. The *Star* begins with the statement, "All cognition of the All originates in death, in the fear of death."² Further, he writes that this fear cannot be escaped or evaded, since death is "the somber presupposition of all life."³ The fear that death will someday swallow up the individual and all of his creations brings the individual to seek an answer or remedy for death, and he first turns to philosophy. Rosenzweig holds that a single line of thought characterizes the philosophic endeavor, from its origins in Greek times to its modern culmination with Hegel, since the concern with death has colored all of its history. Philosophy has always been idealistic. It has sought a "one thing" that forms the basis of everything else in the universe. It reduces the many to a One or All. Philosophy maintains that the "essential I," the only real and permanent part of the person, is identical with God and with the world. An answer to death thus follows: death is only an illusion. What is ultimately real in the individual cannot die since it continues to be part of the All of the universe regardless of what happens to the body. Thus, death only liberates the higher self from its temporal enslavement to the body.

Criticizing philosophy's solution, Rosenzweig argues that the fear and trembling that man feels in the face of death does not go away with such sophistries, no matter how old they are. The sting of death remains, because the individual does not want to know about his "essence" but about himself in the only way that matters, as a distinct individual of body and soul. The individual does not even know what it means to be, except as a person of body and soul. It is as a full person that one enjoys life and is threatened by death. The fact that the individual's fear of death remains, indicates to Rosenzweig that philosophy's abstract portrayal of man is in error. He writes eloquently that the abiding fear of death "condemns the compassionate lie of philosophy as cruel lying."⁴

For Rosenzweig, the feeling of *angst* which man experiences when faced with the knowledge of his death reveals much about human existence. Death discloses, first of all, the fact of the finitude and contingency of life. The terrifying nature of death is omnipresent, so that the individual needs no other reminder that his life must someday end and that, at any moment, an unexpected event might confirm this understanding of the fragility of existence. Death proves that each man enters into life as a being isolated from all other living things. Human life is singular, for the individual knows that death cannot be shared.⁵ One of the most important insights that the fear of death generates is the understanding that life, itself, has no ultimate meaning or purpose. The final victory of death calls

2. Ibid., p. 3.

3. Ibid., p. 5.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 4.

into question the meaningfulness of life. The fact of death denies any value to life, because it threatens to wipe away completely all that the individual has become and has accomplished during his life. The individual concludes that, since meaning is not immanent in life, if there is to be some purpose to existence it must be bestowed upon it.

Finally, the discovery that, in the face of death, the individual does not merely succumb, but works to endow the fleeting moments of his life with permanence and direction, suggests something fundamental about man: Man is a being who refuses to accept death as the final arbiter of life. Thus, the fear of death both brings to light the question of life's meaningfulness and points to the self's ultimate yearning for "a life which is above the creaturely level."⁶

The individual who remains faithful to the picture of reality sketched by his fear of death and who is not soothed by philosophy's illusory answers is left alone with his terrifying knowledge. In the *Star*, Rosenzweig goes back into history to find a time and a place in which this understanding of the human condition was portrayed in all of its starkness, and finds it in the ancient Greek figure of the tragic hero. The tragic hero embodies the way of life of what may be called the "natural man," that is, man untouched by God's revelation. The hero endeavors to live authentically in the world, but in every case he remains an isolated figure who can not find meaning in life. Two qualities characterize the tragic hero: his inability to speak and his encounter with death. When one thinks of Greek drama, says Rosenzweig, one remembers that the hero reveals himself not through his speech with others, but by the soliloquy, that inner monologue of the individual expressed in words, so that even if other actors on the stage can not listen to the hero, at least the audience can discover what is going on. The tragic hero keeps silent, and with this he "breaks down the bridges which connect him with God and the world."⁷ His solitary battle is against death. Mistrusting the world, and alone with himself, "death, his own death, has become the sovereign event of his life."⁸

However, Rosenzweig does not believe that the Greek conception of the tragic hero displays the full range of man's potentialities. He does not look for reason to complete the picture of man, but, again, turns to the area of human passions in order to learn about man and his life in the world. In Part II of the *Star*, Rosenzweig proposes that the passion called love is surely as pervasive as is the fear of death, and, by exploring the nature and implications of love, a fuller understanding of man results.⁹

6. Ibid., p. 155.

7. Ibid., p. 77.

8. Ibid., pp. 76-77.

9. Emil Fackenheim in *Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 215-6, questions Martin Heidegger's portrayal of the human condition in *Being and Time*, which presents the individual's consciousness of his being-toward-death as the fundamental criterion of authenticity. In a very interesting discussion, Fackenheim

Man's experience of love in relation to other men and to God at first reinforces death's lesson that the individual is not one with all things in the world. The deep desire to be with the other, and the grief that comes when the individual is cut off from his beloved, unveil the illusion in philosophy's contention that the individual is identical with the other. The individual's striving to be in the presence of God makes no sense if "in reality" he is one with God.¹⁰ Faced with the either/or of the passion of love or of philosophy's affirmations, the individual knows that the experience of love is too powerful to be denied.

In the *Star*, the experience of love discloses the highest possibilities of human existence, indicating, among other things, the solution for man's loneliness and fear of death. In the experience of love, man learns that he is more than an isolated self. Rosenzweig holds that "love is man's momentary self-transformation."¹¹ Through this passion, the individual finds that his life cannot be satisfactorily lived or understood without speaking of his beloved. Man discovers that in order to give all that he has to the other person, even the self is sometimes denied. In the giving and sharing that punctuate the life of love, the individual knows that the portrait of man as an egotistic, isolated self is not the highest or the most accurate understanding of human existence.

Rosenzweig holds that love is an experience that cannot be fully understood in terms of the purely human realm. Love is both fully human and fully divine.¹² The revealing and sharing of human love mirror the same processes in God's love, His revelation, for man. In God's love, man finds that his life has become transformed. Like all love, God's love is not primarily a promise of something in the future, but a power that fills the present. The presentness of God's turning toward man completely envelops the individual. Within this fully alive present, the individual discovers that God has banished his own anxiety about what the past might have brought or fear of what the future might bring. Even death has lost its power to deny life's meaning. Love overcomes death; that is, it is "strong as death," because it demonstrates that life has a dimension beyond the creaturely level. Love indicates that man has the opportunity of living in God's present, in eternity.¹³

suggests that Heidegger's position is deeply influenced by Christianity. Fackenheim contends that, on the other hand, the portrait of man that views the interaction between man and man as an essential feature of human existence is a more Jewish view of authenticity. Although Fackenheim does not refer to Rosenzweig in this context, the latter's treatment of love as an experience as elemental as the fear of death is in basic agreement with Fackenheim's position in regard to the importance of man's life with other men. For an extended comparison of Rosenzweig's and Heidegger's understandings of death, see the highly regarded article by Karl Löwith, "M. Heidegger and F. Rosenzweig or Temporality and Eternity," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* III (1942): 53-77.

10. Franz Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), p. 363.

11. *Star*, p. 163.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

We have seen that Rosenzweig does not include the experience of love in his description of the "natural man," exemplified by the Greek tragic hero. This individual was so hypnotized by the fear of death that he could not fully turn to others. It is only God's prior turning toward man that releases him from the cords of death and estrangement.¹⁴ Revelation, which brings the healing power of God's love to the individual, awakens the possibility of loving and receiving love from others. Rosenzweig explains revelation's transformation of man by using the word *orientation*.¹⁵ Revelation allows man to encounter the world in a new way. The world is neither alien nor fraught with danger, but is the stage upon which man meets and works with God and with other men. The way in which revelation brings orientation will become clear in the process of analyzing Rosenzweig's understanding of God's turning toward man.

There are two aspects to the word *revelation* as it is found in Rosenzweig's work. Revelation is, first, a public event in the past, and, second, a personal experience in the present. As an event in history, God's two revelations form the basis for the two religious communities, the Jewish one and the Christian one. At particular points in the past God revealed himself to assemblies of people. Those who belonged to, or later became part of, one or the other of these assemblies found that the world had been placed in a new context. God's revelation, which introduced the eternal into the temporal, provided the community with a scheme or pattern. All of time was seen to revolve around the one point in the past and the anticipated event in the future.

Second, revelation is meaningful to man, Rosenzweig holds, because it is experienced in the *present*. In this way the present is tied to the past, and the individual becomes part of the community of those who once stood, and continue to stand, before God.

The personal is verified as eternal truth: birth and rebirth, station and mission, located Here and decisive Now of life . . . Where revelation occurred and the bridge was erected from heaven to earth, from the eternal to the personal, there both the Here and Now are fixed at one and the same time. Both space and time are structured out of revelation. But verification occurs in the very own, in the individual life.¹⁶

The personal dimension of revelation, in addition to binding the individual to the community's historical experiences, tradition, and percep-

14. Joseph Tewes in *Zum Existenzbegriff Franz Rosenzweigs* (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1970), p. 119, noted a disagreement between Rosenzweig and Martin Buber in connection with the relationship between man's experience of God and his life with other people. Buber holds that only after the exchange of I and Thou between man and man is the way prepared for the dialogue with God. Rosenzweig believes that the dialogue with God is the precondition for an authentic life with others.

15. *Star*, p. 187. In a letter written before he started the *Star*, Rosenzweig acknowledged the influence of Eugen Rosenstock in first describing the importance of revelation's effect upon man as "orientation." See *Kleinere Schriften*, p. 358.

16. *Star*, p. 394.

tions of the world, gives him a sense of the meaningfulness of his particular life. It is not enough that one is given general outlines of world history; one must feel that he has a significant part to play within that history. Rosenzweig recognizes that, indeed, the religious man does believe that he has a particular task. He finds himself, in all of his individuality and distinctiveness, addressed by God and asked to act in the world. Acknowledging that not fate, but God, directs history, the individual learns that in the process of living he discovers what must be done.¹⁷

God's revelation of his love for man thus gives the individual something that he could never provide from himself, *trust*. Man cannot bring himself to trust the world and others, as we have seen, for as he stands unrelated to God, his deepest understanding of the world is founded in his fear of death. When man experiences God's revelation the insights provided by his fear are no longer seen as accurate. Through revelation, man becomes conscious that the Power that lies behind all things is a being who cares for man. The awareness of God is translated into the belief that the world and history can be trusted, for He who directs the universe is both the Creator and Revealer.

Seen in another way, in revelation man experiences love, and he knows that his life as lover and beloved defines his self in a deeper way than his fear of death had done. There is a discovery that, as a partner in dialogue, man is more true to himself than as a mute, isolated ego. In the life of dialogue man is conscious of himself as a person both distinct from, and related to, others. He learns that he is an *I* who needs a *Thou*. Revelation is, thus, the presupposition for authenticity in existence, for Rosenzweig holds that, without dialogue and without relationship to others, man would never become an authentic self. He summarizes his understanding of the radical transformation brought about through God's love as follows: "under the love of God, the mute self came of age as eloquent soul."¹⁸

The concluding section of the *Star*, Part III, focuses on redemption. At first glance, the theme of death seems to be absent here. However, after an examination of the following summary of Rosenzweig's discussion of redemption, it will become clear that, once again, he addresses the fear of death in a significant way. In the *Star*, one of the ways of effecting the transition from revelation to redemption is through investigating the ramifications of using love as a simile for revelation.

Rosenzweig's portrayal of the developments that necessarily follow upon revelation demonstrates that he took seriously all of the movements within love. Since love expresses the reality of God's turning toward man, then this "turning" is not something that is to be experienced just once. In a relationship of love, the beloved constantly wants to feel the love of the

17. Ibid., pp. 392 ff.

18. Ibid., p. 198.

19. Ibid., p. 204.

partner. Love has to be renewed all of the time; and, for Rosenzweig, God's revelation is daily experienced anew by the religious man.

The momentariness of love that demands that it be renewed daily also means that the experience of revelation is not sufficient unto itself. The pure momentariness and spontaneity of love needs to be given stability, to be shared with others, and to be decisive for the way that one lives in the world. Similarly, the personal experience of God's love is not enough to satisfy the soul, which longs for some outward form to express its experience. The soul will not allow this paramount experience to be something passing, or an event that is secluded from the rest of life; it yearns

for a love eternal such as can never spring from the everlasting presentness of sensation. This eternity no longer grows in the I and Thou, but longs to be founded in the presence of all the world.¹⁹

For Rosenzweig, the individual's life in the presence of God is given stability and a foundation in the world through participation in the religious community. Although all life in the world is caught up in the process of coming-to-be and passing-away, that is, in a stream of time that is premeated by change and death, Rosenzweig holds that the Jewish and Christian religious communities bring at least a hint of eternity, here defined in terms of permanence, into life.

Rosenzweig's "meta-historical," i.e., a-historical picture of Jewish life is by now familiar to most people who have any interest in modern Jewish thought. Jewish life, although sometimes confronted by dangers and challenges,²⁰ is untouched by time. The people itself is the basis of Judaism's foundation in eternity. The beginning of the people came with God's covenant with Abraham, and the successive generations, the "bearers" of this covenant, constitute Judaism's communion with eternity. Using the metaphor of an eternal fire to describe the Jewish community's meta-historical character, Rosenzweig writes:

The fire of the core must burn incessantly. Its flame must eternally feed upon itself. It requires no fuel from without. Time has no power over it and must roll past. It must produce its own time and reproduce itself forever. It must make its life everlasting in the succession of generations, each producing the generation to come, and bearing witness to those gone by.²¹

The Jewish liturgical year reflects this life with the eternal, a life in which the sparks of redemption, or the consummation of life, are found in the present.

20. Rosenzweig's description of Judaism's eternal character in the *Star* should not obscure his extensive efforts in adult education and in the translation of important sources of Judaism, all of which were aimed at reviving the German-Jewish community of his time. For an account of these efforts, see *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, ed. by Nahum Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1970).

21. *Star*, p. 298.

Rosenzweig enumerates three areas in life in which the religious man experiences eternity in the depth of today. The individual's experience of God's turning toward him provides the first. In turning back to the world, in turning towards one's neighbour and in fulfilling one's tasks before God, eternity is again perceived. And, finally, within the context of the religious community and its liturgy, life is punctuated by experiences of the eternal that are repeated throughout the year. Thus, Rosenzweig understands that the individual need not postpone the hope of finding eternity until the far-off future of God's final act of redemption, because the eternal is continually discovered in the midst of life itself.

Eternity is a future which, without ceasing to be future, is nonetheless present. Eternity is a Today which is, however, conscious of being more than Today.²²

The basic contention of this paper has been that Rosenzweig's concern with man's fear of death underlies the full expanse of the *Star*. Yet, a legitimate question about this judgment arises when one turns to the conclusion of the *Star* with its mystical portrayal of that final act of redemption which is beyond man's experiences of eternity in the present and beyond the world itself. In this crowning act by God, the world and man disappear. They disappear into God! Rosenzweig writes that God "frees Himself from having anything confront Him that is not he Himself,"²³ and that "All merges into His totality."²⁴ Now, it might be objected that this picture of the end is no more satisfactory than the philosopher's speech about the All in All that was discussed earlier. Again, the individual is lost into an all-encompassing, infinite One. If this was not a good solution to the problem of death when it was first offered by philosophy, one wonders why Rosenzweig, at the end, gives us the same formula.²⁵ An answer to this question can be pieced together from the *Star* in the following way. When philosophy initially sought to resolve man's fear of death with its "All in All" it took the individual out of life. It answered death's challenge to life's meaningfulness by reaffirming death's implication that man's life in the world has no real value. Philosophy suggests that the essential I or ego is not destroyed or affected by death, because only the body is torn away with death. However, Rosenzweig saw that if the abstract, essential I is untouched by death, then it is also untouched or unmoved by *life*. It is the person of body and soul, sometimes rephrased as the individual of first and last name,²⁶ who enters into the world of

22. Ibid., p. 224.

23. Ibid., p. 383.

24. Ibid., p. 238.

25. Nathan Rotenstreich raises this question in *Jewish Philosophy in Modern Times* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), pp. 204–5.

26. Franz Rosenzweig, *Understanding the Sick and the Healthy*, trans. and ed. by N. Glatzer (New York: The Noonday Press, 1953), p. 20. This small book, which is Rosenzweig's own non-philosophical version of the *Star*, reaffirms his concern with the problem of death and the fear of death. See, for example, pp. 89–91.

decision and action, of dialogue and responsibility. If only the abstract I or ego is real, then man's life in the world is repudiated. Rosenzweig, in fact, depicts philosophy's resolution of the fear of death as a type of suicide and concludes that philosophy's act of taking man out of life denies life as surely as does the challenge of death.

Rosenzweig's understanding of the significance of living in the world remains as opposed to philosophy's jargon about the "essential I" as was first seen. He endeavors to meet the challenge of death, not through a premature suicide, but through plunging man back into the world in the deepest possible way. For Rosenzweig, only by living with God and with others is death vanquished and authenticity bestowed upon man's existence in the world. As we have seen, the foundation for the victory over death is established when God's love, His revealing Himself to man, provides the individual with a trust in life and an orientation toward the world.

Rosenzweig's suggestion about the final All in All comes only *after* these foundations have been carefully laid. By the time that God's last act is being discussed Rosenzweig believes that death is no longer a problem for the individual. Consequently, the picture of God's All in All is to be understood as a mere hinting about "last things" for those who want to see further, beyond the world and life itself. In response to the somewhat impossible demand for a glimpse of the end, Rosenzweig writes that, ultimately, there will be God alone. He does not expect this vision to be disturbing to his readers. For, he might ask, how can the individual who has been transformed from an egotistic self into a loving soul, who wants, most of all, to be in God's presence, really be concerned with *ultimately* remaining a separate and distinct ego?

The preceding discussion of the fear of death in connection with the treatment of redemption in the *Star* provides the context for examining the concluding lines of Rosenzweig's work.

To walk humbly with thy God—nothing more is demanded there than a wholly present trust. But trust is a big word. It is the seed whence grow faith, hope, and love, and the fruit which ripens out of them. It is the very simplest and just for that the most difficult. It dares at every moment to say Truly to the truth. To walk humbly with thy God—words are written over the gate, the gate which leads out of the mysterious-miraculous light of the divine sanctuary in which no man can remain alive. Whither, then, do the wings of the gate open? Thou knowest it not? INTO LIFE.²⁷

Rosenzweig thus intended that the *Star* thrust the individual back into life. The great hindrance to living fully in the world, the fear of death, is overcome as one learns to trust in life. The *Star* endeavors to demonstrate that this trust is no illusion, since it is founded on the deepest of human experiences. Through the I and Thou of God's revelation to man the

27. *Star*, p. 424.

individual learns of the love and concern that envelop his life before God. Moving into the world, he finds that the dialogue with God is not an isolated event; God's love opens man to the I and Thou of others.

Rosenzweig did not believe that this portrait of the contours of the religious man's understanding of life was something original. The *Star* is an examination of the traditional religious categories of Creation, Revelation, and Redemption. Some of the insights that pervade the book are unique to Rosenzweig; however, in focusing the *Star* on these traditional categories, he implies that this portrait of the religious life should be familiar to the religious person. Whether the *Star* offers a satisfactory answer to man's fear of death is a question which each one must answer for himself. In the light of the last eight years of Rosenzweig's own life, when his physical powers were constantly being curtailed by an on-going paralysis, it is clear that his own courage in the face of death verified his love of, and trust in, life.²⁸

A Plea For Aid

A valuable manuscript by the Russian-Jewish writers, Ehrenburg and Grossman, was smuggled out of Soviet Russia and sent to Israel. It contains the testimony of hundreds of Soviet Jews who survived the Holocaust during World War II.

The Israel Research Institute of Contemporary Society in Jerusalem has undertaken to edit the Russian manuscript for publication.

Funds are needed for this important project. Donations, payable to the Israel Research Institute of Contemporary Society, may be sent to its office, 36 Jaffa Road, Jerusalem, Israel. The book will contain the names of all contributors.

28. The story of Rosenzweig's last years is told through his own words and the words of those who knew him in *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, pp. 144–176.

The First Dreyfus Affair

FREDERICK BUSI

THE WORDS "DREYFUS AFFAIR" FIRST APPEARED in France almost four years before the arrest of Captain Alfred Dreyfus. They were to be found buried in a footnote on page 222 of *Le Testament d'un antisémite*, written in 1891 by France's leading exponent of racist politics, Edouard Drumont. The reference did not apply to Dreyfus the soldier but to another individual with the same family name. Neither was it the last time that the phrase was heard before the French army captain was arrested in October, 1894. The word Dreyfus is simply a variant of the French form, Trèves, for the city of Trier. Jews living there in the Middle Ages adopted it as a family name and it subsequently became common among the Jewish communities in the Rhineland. It was even shared by a number of Gentile families as well.

Edouard-Adolphe Drumont had been catapulted into fame in 1886 by publishing *La France juive*. It became an instant *succès de scandale* and remained one of the largest bestsellers of the century. Among the many targets of abuse in its two fat volumes, several bore the name Dreyfus. It would be tedious and unnecessary to repeat every instance where Drumont brought up the name prior to 1894, but a careful examination of its repetition shows how he conditioned French public opinion to accept readily the guilt of a Jewish officer who happened to share this appellation.

In 1886, when Drumont brought out *La France juive*, certain boulevard wits took malicious pleasure in suggesting that the author was really a renegade Jew trying to atone for his unfortunate choice of parents. Drumont himself recalled seeing a popular caricature circulating in Paris which depicted him as a child at his *Bar Mitzwa*, receiving the blessing of an aged rabbi. The journalist, Abraham Dreyfus, after seeing a photograph of Drumont quipped: "He looks like my old Hebrew teacher."¹ This must have been the cruelest comment of all of those made against one whose main calling in life was to spread hatred of all things Jewish. This insolent journalist called Dreyfus would number among the many whose name was destined to cross Drumont's path.

Overnight, Drumont became a master publicist, who practiced many of those very vices which he labeled as specifically Jewish. With regard to Jewish talent in the publicity field he observed, in 1886, that "The obses-

1. Edouard Drumont, *Sur le chemin de la vie* (Paris: Crès, 1914), p. 108.

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sion of a name constantly repeated is such that the most skeptical and informed people cannot prevent themselves from taking notice." If the particular name is consistently linked to scandal, then it becomes accordingly tarnished and all the more memorable.

Among the many aspects of Jewish life which Drumont claimed to expose, one that stood out for special condemnation was his enemies' legendary *houptza* (sic). In this regard, one particular Jew, Camille Dreyfus, a legislator, was often cited for a variety of offenses. When he dared to promote a bill on income taxes, Drumont railed:

This project being supported by Dreyfus, that is to say by all Jewry, has a chance of being voted, and I would be happy, because it would contribute to exasperating against the Jews the middle class which would be the most directly affected.²

Drumont's many allies also took turns pillorying this Jewish lawmaker. In 1886, the fanatical Jacques de Biez published *La Question juive*, to which Drumont contributed the preface and in which the author recommended throwing Jews off of the soon-to-be-completed Eiffel tower. As for the politician whom he hated the most, Biez devoted ten pages to Camille Dreyfus and his support for a legislative bill advocating separation of church and state. This stance angered Biez

because last among the signers of this proposal I see the name of Mr. Camille Dreyfus . . . whether it's the right hand of Mr. Rothschild or the left of Mr. Camille Dreyfus, it's always the same result. You'll be turning yourself over to the Jews, because these two apparently enemy hands are the two arms of the same individual: the Jew (p.37).

In 1887, Camille Dreyfus was also attacked by Father Georges de Pascal in his work, *La Juiverie*, which devoted a great deal of space to Jews in the press and, in particular to ". . . *La Nation* [a journal] of the Jew Dreyfus . . . of about forty years of age quite adept in politics and business . . ." Father Pascal was also upset by what he identified as the demoralizing effect of the Jewish press on military morale: "Don't we know the power in which Mayer and his *Lanterne* [a journal] engage in the offices of the War Ministry? In truth, the Jew has invaded everything, conquered everything . . ."³

Camille Dreyfus was not the object solely of anti-Semitic wrath; he was also attacked by a remarkable freethinker, Alexandre Weill, who was dubbed by the writer, Robert Dreyfus, "the prophet of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré." Weill was one of the more outstanding Jewish polemicists in France and perhaps the most impassioned enemy of Drumont; he deserved the title of prophet. He effectively condemned Drumont's talk of expropriating Jewish property:

2. "La France juive devant l'opinion," 1886.

3. Georges de Pascal, *La Juiverie* (Paris: Blériot, 1887), pp. 81-83.

And when your Jews are burned and exiled, where will you get the money so that you and your horse Bob can ride through the woods, because this scandalous money is . . . as ill-gotten as the money of the Erlangers and Dreyfuses.⁴

In 1891, when Drumont published that nasty work, *Le Testament d'un antisémite*, he asserted that Catholic bishops had forsaken the poor and preferred the company of high society taken over by the likes of “the Rothschilds . . . Oppenheims, Bernheims . . . Dreyfuses.” It was in this bitter book that the phrase, “Dreyfus affair,” first appears. What is truly ironic is that the Dreyfus here in question was not a Jew but a Catholic. Drumont’s confederates recorded the circumstances surrounding this first Dreyfus affair. According to his disciple, Jean Drault, some fellow anti-Semites had “. . . organized at Pontchartrain, on Sunday, a public talk against the châtelain of Pontchartrain, Dreyfus-Gonzalès whom we used to call Dreyfus-Guano.”⁵

The target of their wrath had been the subject of a parliamentary investigation of his government connections and his South American investments. His execrable nickname was earned from a scheme to buy guano for fertilizer from Peru. According to Drumont, the lawyer for this Dreyfus was Jules Grévy, President of the Republic, whose fall from power was partially prompted by his client’s battles.

In attacking the rich man in his castle these militant anti-Semites hoped to arouse local animosity toward the plutocrat. Instead, they succeeded in provoking the wrath of the famous Jesuit priest, Father du Lac, Drumont’s early mentor and close friend, who was a frequent guest at the Dreyfus table. He chided Drumont’s collaborator, the volatile Marquis de Morès, saying: “You have caused me great distress, my dear child, by attacking these excellent Dreyfuses who have not been Jews but good Catholics for more than forty years . . .”⁶

To this objection another confederate, Jules-Napoléon Guérin, replied that he did not consider “the reason for Dreyfus’ conversion to Catholicism as sufficient to my point of view. . . . Baptize a wolf into a lamb, will you have taken away his carnivorous instincts?” As a racist, Guérin held that baptismal water was ineffective against what he regarded as the Semitic menace. This incident also affords a glimpse into the

4. Alexandre Weill, *Épîtres cinglantes à M. Drumont* (Paris: Dentu, 1888), p. 2. It is worth noting, in passing, a section in this book in which Weill accuses Drumont and voices support for Zionism in its embryonic stage: “If there were in PALESTINE a Jewish republic proclaiming not the stupid religion of rabbis whose religious idiocies border on senile decay and from which has developed that insane, dogmatic Christianity bordering on madness, but the universal religion purified by Moses . . . I would gladly leave you to go and die in Jerusalem” (pp. 23-24). In this same book, on p. 2, Weill also exclaimed: “You will finish up miserably and it will be a Jew who will take pity on you and your children.” This prophecy was uncannily accurate. After Drumont’s death, in 1917, Arthur Meyer, a Jew who had converted to Catholicism and to anti-Semitism, began sending a small stipend to the widow.

5. Jean Drault, *Drumont, la France juive et la Libre Parole* (Paris: Malfère, 1935), p. 99.

6. Jules Guérin, *Les Trafiquants de l'antisémitisme* (Paris: Juven 1905), p. 3.

church's ambivalent stand toward anti-Semitism. The Catholic Dreyfus was defended whereas the Jewish Dreyfus was left to the mercy of the likes of Drumont and his friends who claimed, with little fear of contradiction, to be doing the work of the Lord.

In 1892, Drumont had another chance to attack Jews in print. On April 20th of that year, he brought out the first issue of *La Libre Parole*, soon destined to become one of France's most important journals, and in his first editorial he inveighed against the Jews who pulled the strings to make Europe dance: "Rothschild intervenes on orders from Germany to defeat the Russian loan; Isaac tries out our Lebel rifles on Frenchmen: Dreyfus sends poisoned wheat to those Russians dying of hunger . . ."⁷ Yet another Jew bearing the same name was implicated in scandal in this leading anti-Semitic newspaper.

The popularity of Drumont's journal increased enormously, thanks to the muckraking articles which appeared during the scandals caused by the collapse of the Panama Canal Company. In May, 1892, another scandal of a different kind emerged from a series of defamatory articles entitled "Jews in the Army," which helped contribute to the climate of opinion that would lead to the arrest of Alfred Dreyfus more than two years later. They were signed by Pradel de Lamase who singled out individual Jews, accusing each of being "the spy who shamelessly traffics in the secrets of national defense . . . with the Cahens, the Dreyfuses, and all the other coreligionists." Lamase concluded with the accusation that they were grabbing up the best positions in the military in order to serve Germany.

In his third article of the series, on May 26, Lamase attacked Théodore Reinach, a member of a prominent Jewish family, claiming that Reinach "had for barrack companions (either in the 13th or 12th artillery) a Lehman, a Lévy, a Cerf, a Dietsch, a Hersch, a Dreyfus . . ." Alfred Dreyfus was a member of the 14th artillery. Since Drumont's clientele had been given such explicit details, it becomes easier to understand how they were conditioned to expect a treacherous artillery officer named Dreyfus.

During the summer of 1893, Drumont finally came to blows with Camille Dreyfus who had been attacking him for some time. This Dreyfus had been a member of the Paris Municipal Council from Drumont's own district of Gros Caillou which he represented from 1882 to 1886. As a liberal, he vigorously opposed anti-Semitism, which he stigmatized as a foul German importation and a call to "a war of the races." Camille-Ferdinand Dreyfus should not be confused with another Paris political figure named Ferdinand-Camille Dreyfus. However, with names like these it is easy to see how one could be mistaken for the other.

In the August 31, 1893 issue of the *Libre Parole*, Camille Dreyfus was attacked in sarcastic headlines proclaiming his ingratitude toward its

7. The Dreyfus in question here was the head of a large grain import house.

editor. As Drumont told it, Dreyfus had begged that his name not be mentioned in connection with certain ongoing reports of scandalous activities. Drumont felt deceived by an article appearing in Dreyfus' *La Nation*, which he thought had besmirched his family honor. He demanded satisfaction and lightly wounded Camille Dreyfus. On the following day headlines blared: "The Drumont-Dreyfus Duel" and the journal gave details about the defeat of the enemy Jews, claiming that Rothschild had promised the loser 100,000 francs to kill Drumont.

True to form, Drumont kept his readers entertained with tales of corruption in high places. During the period from December, 1893, and almost up to the arrest of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, one of the longer running stories featured in the *Libre Parole* dealt with yet another Dreyfus affair. This one took place in Russia and it had to do with charges brought against the famous international grain dealer, Louis Dreyfus. Drumont was delighted. He had always praised Russia's anti-Semitic policy and now he was doubly satisfied that his favorite foreign government was prosecuting a rich Jew in Odessa named Dreyfus.

Articles on this subject, entitled "The Dreyfus Trial," appeared in the *Libre Parole* on April 3 and 21, 1894. Drumont was saddened that Russia had not found the grain dealer guilty, and his only consolation was a report, printed on July 5, which reflected the Tsarist government's consternation at this verdict and its determination to take new measures against the Jews, to put "an end to the poisoning of the Russian people." Earlier, on March 26, a special correspondent from Saint Petersburg had reported how Jewish spies working for Germany had infiltrated the Russian arms industry and had "slipped into departmental offices to get their hands on important papers."

The stage was now set to expose Capt. Alfred Dreyfus. By July, 1894, Drumont had taken up temporary residence in Belgium in order to avoid court action against him, but he stayed in constant touch with his journal by daily telephone calls. Thus, his spirit remained active in Paris even in his absence.

In a study of the French press during the ensuing crisis, Patrice Boussel examined a curious, serialized novel which appeared in *Le Petit Journal* from April 27 to July 20, 1894, a popular, mass-circulation newspaper. What was unusual about this potboiler, written by Louis Létang, is that it prefigures in remarkable detail the drama that was soon to unfold in the life of Alfred Dreyfus.

Another revealing aspect about this prophetic tale is the identity of its author. According to historian Henri Guillemin, Létang "is related to Jules-Octave Biot, the military columnist of the *Libre Parole*. This Biot often went hunting with one of his friends, the Lieutenant-Colonel Albert d'Aboville."⁸ Later, in October of 1894, d'Aboville was one of the first, if

8. Jean Chérasse and Patrice Boussel, *Dreyfus ou l'intolérable vérité* (Paris: Pygmalion, 1975), p. 195.

not the first, to identify Alfred Dreyfus as the author of the infamous document known as the *bordereau*, or the list which had actually been written by Esterhazy. It may or may not be significant that, during this same period, Esterhazy was clandestinely contributing material to Drumont's newspaper.

None of this intrigue could have borne fruit if the climate of public opinion had not been prepared by the jingoist press. Real life superior officers were just as concerned with the prying eyes of the yellow journals as were the fictitious officers in Létang's novel. The high command of the French army was sensitive to criticism from the ultranationalist press, and Drumont's paper was unsparing in its attacks on war minister General Mercier, accusing him of favoritism toward Jews and of weakness toward Germany.

On October 15, 1894, the day of Captain Dreyfus' arrest, the *Libre Parole* was raking Mercier over the coals for turning aside the conviction of a Jewish army doctor. Four days later it carried a small notice about shady money transactions between Moïse Lévy and Dreyfus, "an opulent Jew and banker" on the Rue de Louvre. All this, two weeks before the accused's name was to be made public.

The specific circumstances surrounding the events that led to the arrest of Captain Dreyfus remain somewhat murky, though the general details are well known and involve the receipt and evaluation of the *bordereau* and the attempt to determine its origin. Carelessness and malice all played a part in directing attention to the unlikable Jewish artillery officer who was serving as instructor in various sections of the high command.

After the circulation of photographs of the *bordereau* to different departments, no answers were forthcoming that could pinpoint its author. At this crucial juncture of events, Lt.-Col. d'Aboville, of the Communications and Transport bureau, was shown a photograph of the document by his superior, Col. Pierre-Elie Fabre. Both officers had made little attempt to conceal their dislike of Jews and they pointed their fingers at Alfred Dreyfus. What is intriguing about d'Aboville is the nature of his relationship to Drumont's correspondent, Biot, referred to above.

It would be tempting to consider that the behavior of some members of the General Staff was directly influenced by members of the staff at the *Libre Parole*. In short, was Dreyfus deliberately chosen to be the victim of a cabal hatched in the center of France's leading anti-Semitic group? It does not seem improbable. But because of the nature of the affair—the lying, deception, obfuscation—the evidence is not conclusive. It should also be remembered that Drumont's newspaper was not the first to break the news to the public. If it had directed a secret campaign to discredit Alfred Dreyfus it seems unlikely that it would have let such a sensational story pass it by. The safest assumption regarding its role would appear to lie between the two extremes of total innocence and total implication. Be-

cause of his anti-Jewish attitudes and contacts, d'Aboville was probably inclined to single out Dreyfus as the traitor sought by the army high command.

Indirect evidence for Drumont's influence is attested to by almost all historians of the affair. David Lewis comments: "Who could be sure that Drumont was not preparing an article about 'The Jews on the General Staff?'"⁹ After his arrest, Dreyfus was sent to the Cherche-Midi prison, where the man who first accused him gave the prison director instructions to be on guard against the snooping of "high Jewry." Between the time of the arrest and its disclosure to the public, two weeks later, the army high command was the scene of feverish activity. Some officers counseled that Dreyfus be released for lack of evidence, while others began seeking and seeing proof of guilt in various quarters and a series of hastily initiated investigations was put into motion.

When the news of the arrest was leaked to the press and announced to the public the army felt that it had little choice but to build a case against the prisoner in order to avoid nationalist charges of softness toward subversive elements. One of the shoddier investigations and the one most damaging to Dreyfus' case was conducted by a discredited ex-policeman named François Guénée. He was not untypical of a certain element that was paid to funnel back gossip and information to French Counterintelligence.

In order to prepare a case against Dreyfus, Guénée was instructed to make the rounds and uncover anything about the prisoner's personal life. His venal report contained misleading falsehoods, as, for instance, that, despite Dreyfus' personal fortune, he was heavily in debt and that he kept a number of women. Guénée was also sent into the gaming circles of Paris, from which he returned with rumors of Dreyfus' frequenting the Cercle de la Presse and the Washington Club. Guénée had been sloppy enough to confuse the arrested captain's name with those of Camille-Ferdinand Dreyfus and Ferdinand-Camille Dreyfus.

There was even reference to still another Alfred Dreyfus, a Freemason, who turned out to be simply a merchant in Paris. Writing on the incident, historian Guy Chapman observes:

The Préfet of Police, Lépine, who had also set enquiries on foot, at once recognised a confusion of identity, and officially informed Henry that Dreyfus neither gambled nor whored. Lépine's notes were not put into the record; Guénée's were.¹⁰

9. David Lewis, *Prisoners of Honor: The Dreyfus Affair* (New York: Morrow, 1973), p. 21.

10. Guy Chapman, *The Dreyfus Case* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1955), p. 83. See, also, D.W. Brogan, who writes of the affair: "His very name was damaging; as bad as Lévy or Mayer. Had not Drumont in *La Libre Parole* denounced Ferdinand Dreyfus as 'one of the tribe who crawl over France?' It is true that Alfred was not a relation, but what did that matter?" (*France under the Republic 1870-1939* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941], pp. 307-308). According to Joseph Reinach, Guénée had mixed up the names of Camille, Maurice, Maxime, and Paul Dreyfus, all members of the *Cercle franco-américain*. (*Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus* [Paris: Fasquelle, 1903], vol. I, p. 260, note 5.).

The prisoner's brother, Mathieu, also protested, but to no avail, that such motives as were ascribed to Alfred had no foundation. Too late. The wheels of French military justice were oiled by politics. The rest of the story is so well known that it hardly warrants repeating here.

The smell of success prompted the *Libre Parole* to run articles bearing the old title, "The Jews in the Army." They were a platform for vindictiveness toward those critics who had decried the anti-Semitic campaign that had been launched by that journal two years earlier. On December 8, 1894, Drumont took special joy in announcing the arrest of Camille Dreyfus on charges brought by a "limonadier de Marseille." The *Libre Parole* commented that "this man almost became the Minister of War. You can guess what would have become of the national defense in his hands." The charge that prompted the arrest turned out to be so trivial that Drumont's paper even expressed regret that Dreyfus had been so shabbily treated by the government.

Other Jews bearing this name continued to haunt Drumont and his followers. At the end of 1895, Raphaël Viau, a member of Drumont's staff and author of *Ces bons juifs*, fought a duel with Maxime Dreyfus and, though the affair seemed to be resolved, Drumont was still plagued by a phantom from the immediate past. On June 3, 1902, while taking his usual stroll around the Champs de Mars, he was accosted by a certain Dreyfus-Gonzalès, who charged that Drumont had insulted his mother and proceeded to beat him with a heavy cane. Though Drumont was struck, he managed to parry the blows with his own walking stick. One year later, he was aghast to learn that Pope Leo XIII had actually sat while this Dreyfus-Gonzalès, an accomplished artist, painted his portrait. Here was the ultimate insult: a Dreyfus invited by the Supreme Pontiff was more than a good Catholic and anti-Semite should have to endure. Small wonder that Drumont took heart when this pope died shortly thereafter.

Drumont was left with one major consolation. For twenty years he had effectively agitated to arouse France to be aware of what he called the Jewish peril. By constantly attacking Jews, in general, and those named Dreyfus, in particular, he had conditioned his country to accept the charge of treason against an innocent man. Alfred Dreyfus was not merely a victim of mistaken identity, as he thought himself to be. The widespread effects of Drumont's campaign seemed to predestine him to be sent to Devil's Island. He was guiltless and legally exonerated in 1899, but the effects of the anti-Semitic newspaper campaign launched by Drumont never really disappeared. He had taught many of his countrymen to remain perpetually suspicious of Jews. By ceaseless repetition of a simple, hateful idea, linked to a particular name, Drumont helped to change the course of modern French and Jewish history.

On Crucifying the Jews

MICHAEL BROWN

HOWEVER MUCH ONE MIGHT REGRET IT, FEW can fail to sympathize with, and even to participate in, the theological questioning which the Holocaust has sparked. The survivors—and, in a sense, we are all survivors—need ways of understanding. Yet the explanations which past generations have offered for Jewish suffering do not satisfy. Some Jews have been relatively unaffected, but others have lost their belief in God entirely and not regained it. Still others see the Holocaust as the symbol of God's ultimate rejection of Judaism and have become Christian. Rabbi Elisha ben Abuyah, the Talmud relates, fore-swore belief in God after witnessing the death of only one innocent child. One cannot but understand if faith breaks after having witnessed the death of six million innocent men, women and children.

Understanding loss or change of faith does not mean, however, that they are easy to come to terms with—especially not apostasy. There is something unseemly in deserting a sinking ship. Emil Fackenheim says that, if there is one lesson to be learned from the Holocaust, it is to survive as Jews, not to give the Nazis a posthumous victory by disappearing.¹ To leave Judaism seems, at best, indecorous, at worst, treacherous.

The conversion of Jews to Christianity as a response to the Holocaust seems all the more ignoble in the light of the traditional Christian explanation of Jewish suffering. Christians have understood that suffering to be divine punishment for the Jews' twofold sin, first, of failing to recognize the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus and then, according to the classical reading of history, of causing his death. The sins of the Jewish parents are to be visited upon their children: Jews for all time are punished for the blindness and cruelty of their ancestors. Their permanent downcast state serves as witness to the truth of Christianity.

Classical doctrine may not have led directly to the Holocaust. That doctrine proclaimed the necessity of preserving the Jews—or, at least, some of them—in their misery, that they might bear living testimony to Christian truth. And yet, such an understanding of the ages-long Jewish suffering certainly engendered in Christians an insensitivity to the plight of the Jews, perhaps even a willingness complacently to watch their extermination.²

1. Emil L. Fackenheim, *Quest for Past and Future: Essays in Jewish Theology* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 20.

2. Franklin H. Littell, in *The Crucifixion of the Jews* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975),

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Some Christians still adhere to the traditional doctrine regarding Jewish suffering and understand the Holocaust as one more manifestation of the wrath of God being visited upon the Jews for their 2000-years-ago sin.³ One can appreciate the desire of theological conservatives to see all events fitting into classical doctrine. Still, to an outsider, such an explanation seems unacceptable on its own terms. What kind of God would require the degradation, torture, and death of a million Jewish children in the twentieth century as atonement for the shortsightedness of their ancestors two millennia ago? How can anyone believe in such a deity?

Indeed, how can one account for the attraction of Jews to such a belief, especially since Christianity is the faith system, at least nominally, of the perpetrators of the Holocaust? Not surprisingly, many Jews respond with a special measure of distaste when faced with Holocaust survivors who have embraced Christianity. Incomprehension and discomfort are no less acute in confronting works of literature and art which use Christian myth and symbol to interpret the Holocaust.

In fact, Jewish writers who employ Christian terminology to write about the Holocaust have generally evoked dumbfounded consternation from Jewish critics. Elie Wiesel's *Night* and André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just* are two of the most widely read works of Holocaust literature, while the haunting stories of Aharon Appelfeld are among the better known Hebrew literary works in that category.⁴ Yet the obvious Christian elements in these works have been ignored by critics who are either too embarrassed or are just uncomprehending.⁵

As already alluded to, many Jews are well aware that the way in which classical Judaism dealt with Jewish suffering may be inadequate for thinking about the Holocaust. From the Bible on, Judaism has usually connected suffering with punishment for sin, well-being with reward for virtue. Its perception of Jewish history was not very much different from that of Christianity, although the sin was different. Classical Judaism understood the destruction of the Temple, the subsequent exile, and most other tribulations of the Jews as punishment for their failure to achieve *tikkun olam be-malkhut shaddai*, the construction in Palestine of the ideal

makes this point convincingly, as have other Christians. See, for example, Hans O. Tiesel, "Holocaust Interpretations and Religious Assumptions," *JUDAISM*, XXV, 2 (1976): 144-46. The present writer is indebted, of course, to Prof. Littell for the title of this article.

3. See Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), pp. 46-58.

4. A number of Appelfeld's stories might have been used as illustrations, especially "Three" and "Reparations" in the collection, *Smoke* (Jerusalem: Akhshav, 1962). Since these stories are accessible only to the reader of Hebrew, it was decided to refer here only to "Kitty," which is translated in Ezra Spicehandler, ed., *Modern Hebrew Stories* (New York: Bantam, 1971). All references are to that edition.

5. See, for example, Lawrence L. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975). Langer devotes some 29 pages to *Night* and *The Last of the Just*. Yet he makes almost no mention of the extensive Christian imagery in both.

society revealed to them at Sinai and later by God himself, the society which was to serve as a model for the entire world.⁶

The Book of Job already raised serious doubts about the equation of sin and suffering, reward and virtue. Ever since then, Jewish theologians have wrestled with the questions of good and evil and reward and punishment. While not a few have suggested alternative ways of approaching those questions, the basic Biblical preception has persisted.

Almost to a man, however, Jews have been unwilling to apply the traditional explanation of their own suffering to the Holocaust. One reason is theological doctrine itself. Classical doctrine justified the chastisement of the Jews, their suffering. It did not foresee or advocate their extermination. The prophets themselves expected, even desired, the destruction of the Israelite states as retribution for their sinfulness; but they also expected the preservation of the Jewish people and the eventual reconstruction of the state. So, too, believed the rabbis. The Assyrians, the Babylonians, or the Romans might serve as God's instrument for reproofing the Jews, but they were certainly no better than the Jews, who, with the Torah, had, at least potentially, the ability to achieve God's ideal. The other nations would one day pass from the scene. The Jews would survive to rebuild.

The Holocaust bears no resemblance to the destruction of Samaria in 722 B.C.E. or of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. and again in 70 C.E. Not buildings and cities were destroyed, but one-third of the Jewish people, including its most traditionally pious elements. Jews have died not for abjuring the faith of their fathers, but for keeping it. Moreover, were it not for their accidental good fortune in living outside of Hitler's grasp, all the rest of world Jewry would also have been destroyed. Indeed, the experience of the Holocaust seems to be unprecedented in Jewish history and thought.

One might, of course, look upon the state of Israel as the rebirth of the "saving remnant." But it is hard to imagine that Judaism, which could not countenance the sacrifice of one man, Isaac, as a testimonial to faith, would consider six million human sacrifices, all of them unwilling, an appropriate means of bringing about the restoration of Jewish sovereignty.

But even if classical Judaism offers no acceptable mythological frame for interpreting the Holocaust, the use of Christian mythology should be out of bounds to Jews. The cross is not a universal symbol of suffering; it is a very particular Christian mode of understanding experience. Judaism has different myths from Christianity and different values, although it shares a good many with it, especially those which originated in the Hebrew Bible. Jews cannot see Jewish experience—or any experience—in Christian terms and remain authentic Jews. To be themselves, Jews must

6. The author wishes to thank Dr. Robert Gordis for his comments, which helped to clarify the centrality of *tikkun olam* in Judaism, as opposed to the centrality of the passion of Jesus in Christianity. See, for example, the *Aleinu* prayer recited three times each day by pious Jews.

express themselves in Jewish symbolic language, or, at the very least, in neutral language. When they opt for other symbols and myths, they can easily be seen to be rejecting Judaism and, indeed, may be doing so. This is especially the case with regard to Christian myth and symbol, because of the tension and competition which have almost always characterized the Christian-Jewish relationship.

Is it then the case that the three writers mentioned earlier have sold out? Is their faith so broken that they have become closet Christians and now create entirely outside of the Jewish framework? The motivations of artists are not easily fathomed and the artists themselves are unlikely to be of assistance. Plato accused poets of not understanding their own poetry. In part, he was right. Robert Frost used to say that his job was to create poetry, while that of the readers was to understand it. But, while artists may be of little help in explaining their own works, the works themselves can sometimes be illuminating with regard to their creators. And, in fact, *Night*, *The Last of the Just*, and Appelfeld's "Kitty," and especially the way in which Christian imagery is used in all three, do yield some clues about the writers' motivations.

Of the three works, Christian symbolism is least central to Elie Wiesel's *Night*. This book, Wiesel's first and, to this reader, his most powerful work to date, is autobiographical, although apparently fictionalized to some extent. It is the tale of the journey from the sunny, imperturbable tranquility of a Transylvanian town into the nightmare of the concentration camps. It is the story of a father and his son, of their relationship which, alone, preserves the humanity of both and their will to live, and of the ultimate destruction of both humanity and the will to live by the Nazis' deliberate process of dehumanization.

In many ways *Night* is a very Jewish book. Its main characters, except for the Nazis and their collaborators, are all identifiably and positively Jewish. The narrator, Wiesel, is an aspiring young cabbalist when the book opens, and his father is one of the pillars of the Sighet Jewish establishment. When the Jews of Sighet are deported, the narrator sees the deportation in terms of the exile of the Jews to Babylon or, later, from Spain.⁷

It is no surprise that in the hell of Birkenau many of the characters in the book—rabbis and laymen, including the narrator—lose their faith. God seems absent. In response, some people become defiant, although even their defiance is Jewish. (Wiesel, for instance, eats on Yom Kippur.) Others simply surrender their lives. Death becomes a commonplace at Birkenau.

Two deaths, however, are not ordinary, and the narrator treats them rather differently from the others. The first is that of his friend, Akiba Drumer; and here there is introduced the Christian theme. Drumer bears

7. Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Discus Books, 1969), p. 26. All references are to this edition.

the name of a great Jewish sage, a contemporary of Elisha ben Abuyah. Rabbi Akiba, however, kept faith in adversity. He sacrificed his life rather than obey the Roman prohibition against teaching Torah in Palestine. He died teaching others how to live by Torah, how to build the ideal world. Unlike his namesake of Roman times, Akiba Drumer, in his trials, loses faith in God. He cannot "see a proof of God in this Calvary." Like Jesus, in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Drumer predicts the hour of his own death and then dies, wondering, in the words of the Psalmist, why God has abandoned him.⁸

The other extraordinary death is that of a beautiful child, a servant of one of the *kapos*. The narrator refers to the child, as do the other inmates, as "the little servant, the sad-eyed angel." In retribution for the sabotage activities of his boss, "the sad-eyed angel" is put to death, one of three people hanged together on a gallows. That there are three (two adults and one innocent child between them) suggests the Gospels' portrait of an innocent Jesus crucified together with two robbers, one on either side. The similarity with Jesus does not end there. Death does not come immediately to "the sad-eyed angel" when he is hanged, as it did not to Jesus. Suspended from the gallows, he dies slowly before the eyes of the unwilling onlookers. Then someone asks:

Where is God now?

The narrator responds to a voice within himself and answers:

Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows. . . .⁹

In what is probably the climactic scene of *Night*, God dies on the gallows, just as Christians understand God to have done in the person of Jesus almost 2000 years ago.

Wiesel does not write of God rising. In François Mauriac's introduction to *Night*, however, an introduction to which Wiesel seems not to object, the Christian myth is completed. With unintended irony Mauriac asserts that, in modern Israel, "the Jewish nation has been resurrected from among its thousands of dead [sic!]," and that Wiesel himself physically resembles "that other Israeli, his brother, . . . the Crucified, whose Cross has conquered the world."¹⁰

Appelfeld's story, "Kitty," relies much more on a Christian mythological frame than does *Night*. In fact, all of the characters, except for Kitty, are Christians. Kitty is apparently a Jewish child who has been hidden in a convent by her parents in the hope that she will be saved from extermination. At first, Kitty is lost in the strange world of the convent. She speaks

8. Ibid., p. 88.

9. Ibid., p. 76. Although he does not comment on Wiesel's use of the Christ motif here, Tiefel, *loc. cit.*, p. 146, does take notice of it.

10. François Mauriac, "Introduction" to *Night*, p. 10.

neither its spiritual tongue, Christianity, nor its everyday language, French. The art, the architecture, and the catechism are all foreign.

Kitty is assigned to one of the sisters for training, a sister named Maria, who initiates Kitty into the world of the convent, teaching her French and New Testament passages, and, especially, a basic vocabulary of three words, "Father, Mother, Son."¹¹ These three words are obviously suggestive of both the Trinity and the Holy Family.

Little by little, as her education and spiritual development progress, Kitty comes to feel at home in the convent. At first the art on the walls meant nothing to her. Then "he [i.e., Jesus, was] revealed to her . . . from the concealed part of the picture," speaking to her in suffering.¹² At last when "the girl would call . . . Maria felt as if the holy infant itself were calling her."¹³ Maria gradually assumes the role of her namesake, Mary, the mother of Jesus, while Kitty becomes more and more Christ-like. "Saint Matthew, Saint Nicholas, and above all the Holy Virgin, became her friends. . . ."¹⁴ In words heavy with Christian meaning, Maria responds to Kitty's question about her roots, by telling her, "We have no parents, God is our father."¹⁵

And, finally, Kitty shares the fate of Jesus. Maria, her mentor and protector, is sent away, and the girl is left in the care of Katrina, Maria's cousin and also a nun, and of Peppi, a servant-girl from the nearby town. Katrina is a bitter woman, probably a Jew-hater, who cannot get along with Maria. Kitty's response to Katrina is "compassion."¹⁶ Peppi is a whore and a thief on good terms with the German soldiers camped in the town. Her husband, a murderer, had joined the German army earlier. When Kitty refuses to consider plundering the convent with Peppi, Peppi turns on her, calling her, "dirty Jew" and "hairy Jew."¹⁷ It is probably she who betrays Kitty.

Katrina hides Kitty in the cold cellar among the blood-red beets. "The war was drawing to an end. A final ceremony was still needed."¹⁸ When the Germans break into the convent, Katrina, like Peter denying Jesus, denies having hidden Kitty or knowing anything about her. When Kitty is brought up from the cellar looking "even taller" than before, she is "floating in space," like Jesus on the cross. Like him, too, innocent of all sin, she is put to death and "angels embraced her arms."¹⁹

In *The Last of the Just*, Schwarz-Bart's use of Christian imagery is more elaborate and complex, in part because his work is a full-fledged novel.

11. Appelfeld, "Kitty," p. 224.

12. Ibid., p. 226.

13. Ibid., p. 230.

14. Ibid., p. 232.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 238.

17. Ibid., p. 240.

18. Ibid., p. 246.

19. Ibid.

His is also, in many ways, a more subtle use of Christian themes. Ostensibly, the novel has a Jewish mythological frame: that of the legend of the *lamed-vav*, the 36 righteous men, unknown even to themselves, by whose virtue the world is preserved from destruction. In fact, however, the frame is a Christian one. The 36 are different from those in the Jewish legend. These 36 are Christ-figures, who suffer for the sake of others, who forgive the world for the evil done to them and grant absolution.²⁰

Christian symbols appear in the novel at key points where they are very telling. A few examples must suffice. The hero, Ernie Levy, is helped by a farm boy to find his way home. The boy accompanies Ernie only so far, abandoning him "as they neared his calvary."²¹ Ernie's mother takes the other children to visit him in the hospital, and the procession is described as a "rosary of tiny Levys."²² Another time, Ernie is set upon by a gang of boys, angry because he is on friendly terms with the other outstanding pupil in his class, Ilse, an Aryan girl. Ernie is humiliated by having his pants pulled down (and his Jewishness revealed) and then beaten, receiving a gash on the head, which cakes with blood. He flees to a nearby field, where he covers the gash with a prickly nettle leaf, his crown of thorns.²³

Ernie Levy has inherited *lamed-vav* status from his grandfather. In line with Schwarz-Bart's Christian reworking of the *lamed-vav* legend, Ernie's life is a recreation of the Gospel's life of Jesus, leading up to his final crucifixion. The novel is a novel of coming of age; and part of Ernie's coming of age is growing into the role of Jew. Schwarz-Bart defines that role of Jew, as living the life of Jesus.

Ernie is the son of an eastern European Jew, who migrated to Germany after World War I, and his German-Jewish wife. He is also a member of the Levy clan, which has produced a *lamed-vav* martyr in every generation since the Middle Ages. Already as a small child, Ernie begins to grow into his vocation of Jew *cum lamed-vav cum* Jesus. With some Christian playmates he gets caught up in an impromptu play, a passion play, and Ernie, the only Jew in the group, is forced to act the role of the Jews in the Gospels shouting for Jesus' death.²⁴

Often Ernie wavers between suicide and life, between dying like a Christian martyr, for others, and a more Jewish response to adversity, strengthening himself to live with, and for, others. He decides to increase his stamina by inflicting wounds upon himself with matches. The burn he makes is described in Christian terms. It is "a splendid stigma" on the palm, one of the places where nails had been driven into Jesus' body on

20. André Schwarz-Bart, *The Last of the Just* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961), pp. 5, 49, 53, 61, 77, 114, 148-9, 185. All references are to this edition.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-49.

the cross, and from which blood has been said to flow in the case of certain Christ-like people thus miraculously affected. The stigma toughens Ernie up for life; but even more it is training for the greater wound, death. Ernie explains to his grandfather on that occasion that, like Jesus, he sought to die that others might live.²⁵

A suicide attempt, in the wake of his rejection by Ilse and the attack of the gang, is actually a crucifixion, Ernie's first. Despondent, he climbs through a bathroom window.

Then he brought his arms together in the attitude of a diver, wriggled half his body through the gaping square of the window, and found himself suspended between heaven and earth.²⁶

Ernie attempts to die like Jesus, suspended between heaven and earth, although the act is one of escape and is not done for the sake of others.

Ernie flees Germany to France, where, after serving in the quickly defeated French army, he goes into hiding and is apparently safe. But he cannot escape his vocation; he cannot bear to escape the fate of his fellow Jews. He returns to German-occupied Paris from the Vichy-controlled and safer south.

Events come rapidly to a climax. Together with Golda, whom he has come to love, Ernie is on a transport from France to Auschwitz. He has at last found his vocation. On the train he "weeps blood" in compassion with his fellow Jews traveling with him to their extermination, their crucifixion.²⁷ He attaches himself, after the manner of Jesus, to a group of children, becoming their comforter.²⁸ And then, as the selection is being made at the gate of Auschwitz, Ernie, "the lamb of God," speaks to the children in words reminiscent of those of Jesus:

We shall enter the Kingdom together . . . in a little while we shall enter it hand in hand . . . Over there my little lambs.

As he prepares to die, Ernie sees himself suffering the fate of the martyred Rabbi Haninah ben Teradion, a contemporary of Rabbi Elisha ben Abuyah and of Rabbi Akiba, who, like Akiba, died for refusing to abjure Judaism and the teaching of Torah. Ernie, however, does not teach Torah. At the last moment he comforts Golda with a Christian-sounding promise, that they will meet again after death.²⁹

There can be no question, of course, that the Christian imagery in each of the three works discussed is intentional. It is too obvious to be otherwise. Each author uses Christian symbols to interpret the Holocaust, viewing the destruction of the Jews as a modern version of the passion.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 270.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 401.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 394ff.

29. *Ibid.*, p.403.

Since all three authors lived through the Holocaust in Hitler's Europe, they are, in fact, portraying their own lives and experiences in Christian terms. The question remains: how is one to understand a Jew's having done so?

A recent essay on Chagall by S.L. Schneiderman asks why the artist dealt with the Holocaust by painting crucifixion scenes, in which the crucified one is a *shtetl* Jew wrapped in a prayer shawl, and in which the background is the burning world of eastern European Jewry destroyed by Hitler's legions. Basing his argument on the Christian symbolism and on some comments and actions of Chagall, Schneiderman suggests that the reason is that Chagall wavers between Judaism and Christianity. According to the critic, although Chagall has not formally apostasized, he has come to see the Christian myth as a more compelling way of understanding human experience and of expressing suffering than any Jewish myth. His works exhibit, according to Schneiderman, a rejection of Judaism, a growing faithlessness.³⁰

In the opinion of this writer, that judgment is neither fair nor accurate. In fact, Schneiderman, and those who evince embarrassment at the Christian imagery of the three writers under discussion, fail altogether to grasp the significance of the works that they seek to interpret. To be sure, in the works under consideration, Wiesel, Schwarz-Bart, Appelfeld, and Chagall use a Christian mythological frame and not a Jewish one. That, in itself, however, does not constitute evidence of wavering in the direction of a commitment to Christianity. Neither do the comments or behavior of the artist, which, as noted earlier, must always be taken with a grain of salt.

It is interesting to see how the three writers portray Christians and the Christian world. Schwartz-Bart presents the widest variety of Christians, while Appelfeld is the only one of the three to present Christians in an overtly Christian setting. Yet, despite the differences in approach, there are some striking similarities.

Wiesel's non-Jews are not the focus of his book, and there are not many of them in it. He never identifies his gentiles as Christian, although they must be presumed to be at least nominally so, since they are Germans, Poles, and other Europeans. These Christians almost all serve as *kapos*, concentration camp authorities, Gestapo agents, or Hungarian or Roumanian police.

A few of them show some small degree of kindness to their Jewish victims. Most, however, as might be expected from what we know all too well about the camps, are brutish and brutal. They treat the Jews like animals; they are themselves predators and scavengers. There is not a single idealized or even admirable Christian in the book. Once, at a

30. S.L. Schneiderman, "Chagall—Torn?" *Midstream* (June/July 1977): 49-62. Reference is made there to a number of paintings: "The Calvary" (1912), "White Crucifixion" (1938), "The Martyr" (1940), "Descent from the Cross" (1941), "Yellow Crucifixion" (1943), and "The Soul of the Shtetl" (1945). There are others.

particularly difficult moment, the narrator hears a kind word from a young girl working in the camp. After the war he meets that same girl by accident in Paris. They reminisce. Finally, he summons the courage to ask; and, indeed, she turns out to be a Jew. The one kind non-prisoner with whom he had come in contact during all those long months was not a gentile, after all, but a Jew with Aryan papers.³¹ It was the voice of Jacob, if the hands of Esau.

Schwarz-Bart's gentiles are a more mixed lot. Mr. Kremer, Ernie's teacher, tries, at considerable cost to himself, to uphold old-fashioned standards of decency and intellect. Ilse, Ernie's fellow-pupil, is torn. Although ultimately she fails to stand by his side, that failure stems more from weakness than from evil. A few others in the book also show kindness or understanding towards Jews and serve as examples of civilized, even admirable behavior.

Most of the gentiles in the book, however, behave in a very "un-Christian" manner. At best, they are cold and unfriendly towards Jews, treating them as exotic and undesirable strangers. At worst, they taunt and jeer at them, humiliate them, betray them, beat them, and finally murder them.

As in *Night*, none of the gentiles plays an explicitly Christian role, except in one instance, the impromptu passion play performed by Ernie's classmates. That incident, however, is revealing. When the Christian children act out the central myth of their tradition, they are seen at their most violent and ugly. The scene stands in direct contrast to the Christ-like behavior of Ernie on his way to the crematorium as a gentle leader and comforter of children. Ernie, the Jew, knows how to play the role of Jesus. The Christian children do not.

On the surface, Appelfeld's treatment is rather different. His story takes place in a convent, and most of the characters are visible Christians, except for Peppi and the soldiers, the nominal Christians. The sisters have saved Kitty at some risk to themselves, although not without the hoped-for reward of making a new convert. They, or rather Maria, care for Kitty and nurture her.

But Appelfeld also does not portray his Christians in a favorable light. The ominous abbess inspires "uneasiness."³² Katrina's strongest emotion is enmity for her cousin; she harbors no love for Kitty, either, and denies any connection with her. Maria shows more warmth and concern, but these are surface emotions. Her life is "closed up;" there is a "deep hollowness within her."³³ She is a partial person and a failure even at that. At the crucial moment, when Kitty needs her, she is absent.

The non-Jewish world, which is clearly Christian, is presented in most negative terms. Outside of the convent there is little but sex and violence.

31. Wiesel, *Op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

32. Appelfeld, *loc. cit.*, p. 222.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

The German soldiers, who are Hitler's men of war and who go about half naked, remind Kitty of the Crusaders as they are depicted in one of the pictures in the great hall of the convent, fighting the battles of the Lord. Peppi is the source of Kitty's knowledge of sex; she is a whore, and she exhibits open violence towards Kitty. Even in Maria's family, one brother is a soldier and her sisters are whores.

The convent represses sexuality, but it is built upon blood. To Kitty, the outstanding feature of the picture of Jesus on the wall in the great hall is the "rivulets of blood [that] flowed as far as the angel's feet, and from there to the windows."³⁴ In the cellar there are jars and jars of blood-red beets and vishniac, as well as Kitty, whose blood is soon to be shed.

What emerges from the three works, then, is, on the one hand, an approach to the Holocaust through Christian symbols and imagery, and, on the other hand, a portrait of Christians and their world as cruel and bestial. In that bestial society, the Jews suffer the fate of Jesus. They are crucified. It is the Christians who crucify them. In these works Jesus represents an ideal for human life and death; but his only true followers are Jews. They are the ones who live and die like him. If the Church has traditionally thought of itself as the true Israel, Wiesel, Schwarz-Bart, and Appelfeld seem to believe that the Jews are the true Christians. And, ironically, the Christians in their works behave like the Jews as the Gospels portray them.

Certainly it cannot be said that these works display any sort of crypto-Christianity. The Christian world is too unappealing. And, yet, in the mind of the Jewish reader, there linger the inevitable embarrassment and doubt, just as they do in the mind of the Jew who looks at Chagall's crucifixions. Like the parents of Chaim Potok's Asher Lev, gazing upon their puerile son's masterpieces, "Brooklyn Crucifixion I" and "Brooklyn Crucifixion II" for the first time, we are disquieted, perhaps even angry.³⁵ The Christian world may be undesirable in these works, yet it is the Christian ideal, which the Jews achieve, that is most desirable. Can it be that Christian imagery is the most compelling way of understanding the suffering of the Jews? Can it be that Christian symbols and mythology, those of the faith system of the perpetrators of the Holocaust, suggest the highest ideal of behavior for human beings? Especially in light of the fate of Europe's Jews, would not the central Jewish ideal of *tikkun olam*, striving to perfect the world of men, be a more desirable goal for all men and, certainly, a more seemly one for Jews?

Perhaps, indeed, the Jewish faith of the three authors under discus-

34. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

35. See Chaim Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1972), pp. 341-42. The hero of the novel, Asher Lev, is a Hasidic Jew who becomes an artist. Much of the book is taken up with Lev's wrestling with the question of whether and how to use Christian symbols in his work. It is unclear to the reader why he decides to do so, except perhaps that he is immature and unstable. It is very clear, however, why his parents are repelled, although the unbelievably naive artist remains uncomprehending.

sion was broken by the Holocaust (or, even before), and they have rejected Judaism. *Night* is testimony that Wiesel's beliefs were shattered, at least for a time. Perhaps, too, Jewish symbols do seem to these artists inadequate or inappropriate for interpreting their experiences and those of the other Jews of Hitler's Europe. It may be that, in the eyes of Wiesel, Appelfeld, and Schwarz-Bart, *tikkun olam* is an anachronism, and Christ-like death is the only possibility in a world which has been conquered by the Cross.

None of this, however, is the point of these works, which do not really portray Jewish experience or Jewish belief. For that matter, neither do Chagall's passion scenes. For the most part, these attempt to interpret Christianity. They depict the Christian world. They are heavily ironic and very biting. Wiesel, Schwarz-Bart, and Appelfeld portray a Holocaust kingdom in which Judaism can not even begin to work at *tikkun olam*, its vision of a just and orderly society. Jews can only die. Their only decision is how to die.

The focus in the works under discussion is triple. It is on the Jews like Ernie Levy, who, in a Christian world, choose, perhaps for lack of other options, to live and die the life and death of the Jew, Jesus. It is also on those like Kitty and the narrator of *Night*, who are forced into an unwilling martyrdom. Finally, it is on the nominal and the committed Christians, who prevent the achievement of the Jewish vision, and who do so, at least in part, by acting according to their own religious mythology and doctrine, supposedly suffused with love and mercy.

As Schwarz-Bart sees him, Jesus was "the beautiful herald of an impossible love."³⁶ According to the Gospels, Jesus preached life and died that others might live. Those Gospels already claimed that Christianity was the religion of love, mercy, and compassion, and that Judaism was the religion of unfeeling justice and law. Yet, according to the understanding of Jewish suffering that Christianity has held for almost 2000 years, the brutalization and suffering of the Jews were permissible, even expected. It seemed natural to Christians that Jews should be forced to play the role of Gospel Jews in the passion play of history and, finally, the role of Jesus, the Jew. It is a short step from classical doctrine to extermination.

In allowing the crucifixion of the Jews, however, Christians were destroying themselves as well. The Jew, wrapped in his *tallit*, nailed to the cross in the midst of a world in flames, "the sad-eyed angel" on the gallows, Kitty being shot, and Ernie Levy in the ovens, all stand for both love and justice denied. They are Jesus as Christians have claimed to understand him. In the Holocaust, the followers of Jesus destroyed those Jews and, thus, their own central myth as well.

That is surely the theme of the three works discussed here. It is also the sensibility behind those Chagall canvasses. These works add little to Jewish self-perception, although perhaps a great deal to that of Christians. Rather less *Night*, but certainly "Kitty," *The Last of the Just*, and the

36. Schwarz-Bart, *Op. cit.*, p. 150.

Chagall paintings represent a Christian understanding of suffering and of the Holocaust, although they diverge in an ironic fashion from the traditional Christian perception of Jewish suffering. By implication, they declare that traditional understanding to have been no understanding at all.

Night, "Kitty," and *The Last of the Just* are not the works of Jews on the threshold of becoming Christians, although they are also not affirmations of Judaism. Jews searching for ways of dealing with the Holocaust may be disappointed that the authors did not explore Jewish myth and symbol in the works under discussion. They need not, however, be chagrined at their underlying sensibility. All three assert that the Holocaust was, at root, a Christian phenomenon and not a Jewish one, that foremost it raises theological questions for Christianity. From the standpoint of the works under discussion, the Holocaust calls into question not the possibility of remaining Jewish, but rather, the possibility of remaining Christian.

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All That's Fit To Print?

Censorship and Freedom of Expression in Jewish History. By MOSHE CARMILLY-WEINBERGER. New York. Sepher-Hermon Press, Inc., with Yeshiva University Press, 1977. 205 pp. \$12.50

Reviewed by HERMAN DICKER

THE AUTHOR of this volume, now a Professor Emeritus of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University, can look back on a distinguished career in congregational, public and research activities that goes back to 1934, the year he became Chief Rabbi of Cluj, Transylvania. There he remained until the Nazi takeover of 1944, when he made his way to Palestine. With the establishment of the State of Israel, Moshe Sharett, then Foreign Minister, invited Prof. Carmilly to join the Diplomatic Corps, from which he resigned after a few years to return to his first love: education and research.

We should be grateful for this return, particularly when reading his latest book on *Censorship and Freedom of Expression in Jewish History*. This important topic, so the author told me, had been occupying his attention from the earliest stages of his scholarly work. Although all of his notes were lost in the Holocaust, he started over again, and ultimately put out his Hebrew work, *Sefer Vesayif [Book and Sword]*, (New York, 1966). That book deals, in a chronological order, with the issues of censorship. However, the very positive reaction to it, particularly his English introduction, convinced the author of the need for publishing his findings in English. This is the volume now under review, and it presents a completely new arrangement of

the research in a topical and subject-matter fashion. As a Reference Librarian dealing constantly with the problem of finding material and bringing it to the attention of the reader, I deeply appreciate the manner in which Prof. Carmilly organized the topics and supportive references, making it easier for scholars and students to arrive at facts, to understand personalities and to penetrate issues.

Before commenting on some of the topics, let me emphasize that Prof. Carmilly is the first to deal principally with Jewish censorship. Others before him have been concerned mainly with the censorship of Jewish material by non-Jewish authorities, such as the Church or secular governments. Carmilly concentrates on the suppression of Jewish authors and books by Jews themselves. His work developed, thus, into an intellectual history of our People during the last 2000 years. It is based on carefully researched sources, found in libraries throughout many parts of the world. His indices list over 700 names of authors and 400 titles of books, written in Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, Spanish, Yiddish, German, French and Hungarian, all carefully transliterated and translated into English.

Internal Jewish censorship operated in several periods and many ways: a classical example is the struggle of the rabbis against Maimonides (1135-1204) and his philosophical writings as laid down in his *Guide to the Perplexed* and other works. Since there was no central authority approving or reviewing publications, the fight against any controversial opinions became the task of individual rabbis who tried to refute "dangerous" concepts through publications of their own and, ultimately, through

the issuance of a ban (*herem*), forbidding the study or reading of the book in question. Of course, such bans were of limited value since their acceptance depended on various circumstances, such as the importance of the rabbi, his influence upon the Jewish people and/or the time and place of publication. Another example is the struggle which occurred in the 16th century, surrounding the publication of the *Zohar* (*Book of Splendor*), the basic text book for the study of the Kabbalah. Some rabbis tried to ban the *Zohar* and the study of mysticism altogether, whereas others tried to limit its study to those of a more mature age and only if they were well versed in rabbinic law.

In order to prevent the publication of unsuitable works, the practice evolved of rabbinic endorsement (*haskamah*). For instance, in Ferrara, Italy, in 1554, the Jewish communities there adopted a resolution requiring each author to obtain endorsements from three rabbis of the city in which a book was to appear. Only then would he be permitted to apply to the governmental authorities for approval to publish his work. This not only curtailed offensive views, but also helped the author in the sale of his book. Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1763–1839), a renowned authority, blames the appearance of unsuitable books on the lack of such rabbinical endorsement (*Responsum* No. 41, *Hoshen Mishpat*). Of course, what was considered unfit, dangerous or untimely in an earlier day, often turned out worthwhile and acceptable at a later one. Historic hindsight can attest to the limited effects of censorship and ban. For example, the struggle of Rabbi Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna, (1720–1797) and of other rabbis against the rise of hasidism in the 18th century, did not prevent this movement from becoming one of the strongest forces of traditional

Judaism; neither did the fight of the rabbis against Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) and his translation of the Bible into German stop either the eventual usage of the vernacular or the advance of Enlightenment. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888), one of the foremost leaders of Orthodox Judaism, also composed his translation and commentary on the Pentateuch and the Psalms in the German language. However, there is a difference. Hirsch tried to teach the meaning of the text, whereas Mendelssohn's translation was criticized and banned by the rabbis who saw in it a tool for the study of a foreign language and the acceptance of a foreign way of life.

In the middle of the 19th century, the battle for a more well-rounded rabbinical education was waged by Rabbi Israel Hildesheimer (1830–1899) who, in addition to intensive Talmudic training, had a doctorate in Semitic studies from the University of Halle, Germany. After his appointment to a pulpit in Hungary, he tried to establish a Rabbinical Seminary which would include in its curriculum not only Talmud and Codes, but also courses in Bible and Jewish history. The right wing rabbis, afraid that his University background would have a bad influence upon the students and their interest in the Talmud, thwarted his efforts. Undaunted, Hildesheimer did not give up. He moved to Berlin and there founded a Seminary which produced the very best of traditional leadership, benefitting communities throughout the world.

Two personal reminiscences may be appropriate in this context, for they prove the tragic consequences of a narrow definition of what constitutes Judaism. First: Rabbi Meir Hildesheimer (1864–1934), the son of the Seminary's founder, fearful of the rise of Hitler, tried to ar-

range for a transfer of the Seminary and its students to Palestine. All of us, seeing him off at the train station, were hopeful that his plans would prove successful. That was early in 1934. He returned, broken in spirit, for he had met with opposition from the Yeshiva leadership in Palestine which was afraid that the Seminary would destroy the existing pattern of rabbinical training. Second: After World War II this writer, by then a US Army Chaplain in Germany, had the good fortune of meeting Rabbi Jehiel Jacob Weinberg (1885–1966), the last Rector of the Seminary, who had been an inmate of several concentration camps and was then recuperating from his years of deprivation in a hospital in Nurnberg, Germany. Throughout all my visits with him he begged me to take him to Berlin so that he could see what had happened to the Seminary and his library. Obviously, the extent of the Holocaust had not yet entered his full consciousness. We finally managed to transfer him to Switzerland, where he recovered and produced very important rabbinic works.

To sum up: Carmilly has written a very scholarly and thought-provoking study. It is a veritable goldmine of accurate information which will become the major reference volume in the field of Jewish censorship and freedom of Jewish expression. It is highly recommended to scholars, students and the general public.

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There Should Be More Conservative Responsa

Conservative Judaism and Jewish Law. Edited by SEYMOUR SIEGEL. New York. The Rabbinical Assembly, 1977.

Reviewed by SOLOMON B. FREEHOF

THIS VOLUME is a rich and important symposium of Conservative Jewish thought, and, as such, it constitutes a valuable addition to the inner history of modern Jewry. To this reviewer, however, the volume would have been more complete had it been amplified in a certain direction. As it stands, it might be characterized as an analysis of Conservative thought as it is related to our inherited Orthodox standpoints. But there is no adequate discussion of the relation of the Conservative philosophy of Jewish law to that of the Reform philosophy of halakhah.

There is, after all, a special relationship between Conservatism and Reform. Conservative Judaism began when Zachariah Frankel walked out of the Reform Rabbinical Conference in Frankfurt in 1845. Then the movement received its great impulse in America when Solomon Schechter was brought from Cambridge "to stem the tide of Reform." In a sense, Conservative Judaism, from its very beginning, declared its difference from Reform Judaism, so it is natural that in this symposium there should be numerous references to that fact. These references take the form of a sentence or two in almost every article in the book and all are deprecatory. But, surely, such an off-hand treatment of the Reform movement is not worthy of this otherwise fine volume. Due to past history, these deprecatory comments are to be expected, but due, also, to newer historical development, such a treat-

ment of the relationship between the two modernist movements in Judaism is out-of-date. Besides, both movements are standing together today as embattled allies in Israel, fighting for religious equality. Surely, then, in a book devoted to a modern interpretation of Jewish law, the relationship, if only for contrast with Reform, should be fully dealt with.

In some later volume (for this fine work deserves a successor) the Conservative analysis of Reform should consider both present-day Reform as well as its past. The Reform movement is to be judged not by its small beginnings in Europe, but by its extensive development in America. Its Union of congregations here has over seven hundred members. Its rabbinical association has over a thousand members. Its rabbinical college has four well-attended branches in Cincinnati, New York, Los Angeles and Jerusalem.

Jewish Orthodoxy contemplating such a vast religious creation might deem it to be a massive heresy. But Conservative Judaism cannot make such a judgment. It is the basic principle of Conservatism that the Jewish people itself is a vehicle of creative religious revelation. If, then, the Jewish people of America have created so vast a religious edifice as the Reform movement, then Conservatism cannot brush it aside. It must necessarily treat Reform with some respect as a religious achievement of the Jewish people.

Besides an acknowledgment of this contemporary phenomenon, there is also a historical consideration which comes closer to the problems of Jewish law. While it is true that the Conservative movement began when Frankel walked away from the Frankfurt Reform conference in 1845, before he could walk away, he had to *attend*. Why did this scholar attend this confer-

ence? Evidently he felt that there was some need for it. What the need was must be judged against the nature of the Orthodox of the time.

Moses Sofer of Pressburg, in his opinion published in *Eleh Divrei Ha-bris*, declared that we have no right to change a single word in the prayerbook. That this was not a chance statement can be seen from his responsum Number 28, *Orah Hayyim*, in which he tries to prove that it is wrong to move the *bimah* from the center of the synagogue up forward toward the Ark. After struggling to find a justification for this objection, he ends by a general doctrine, "*Haklal ha-hodosh osur min ha-Torah*," "Any innovation is illegal, prohibited by the Torah." This phrase of his has been picked up and re-used by many Orthodox scholars and publicists and is constantly repeated. Certainly at the time when it was spoken it represented a correct picture of Jewish Orthodoxy as firmly entrenched and rigidly immovable. In the organized, strongly-controlled communities of those days, it would have been impossible to bring about any gradual change in the prayers or the practices. Change could come only through bold revolutionary action, and the first reformers were battling revolutionaries, as they needed to be. Like revolutionaries, of course, they may have gone too far with regard to certain observances. However, the fact remains that if Reform had not made its Declaration of Independence, Conservative Judaism would not today be writing its Constitution. More than perhaps each realizes, the two movements have much in common and must understand each other fully and sympathetically. This reviewer deems it a distinct lack, in a volume of Jewish law, that there is no serious analysis of the relationship between Conservative Judaism and the Reform

from which it can be said to have sprung and with which now, at least in Israel, it is allied.

As to the contents of the book, they are varied and rich. Let us turn first to the closing section, which contains five responsa, each by a separate author. Three of them deal with the rights of women, one with abortion and another with kosher wine. There is no point in indicating additional references which the respective authors might have made or in pointing to the fact that they often resort to searching out the unavowed motivation for certain commandments (*ta-amei ha-mizvos*). After all, this type of search, though contrary to the dictum of R. Isaac in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 21b) was followed by almost all of the Jewish philosophers in the Middle Ages. The important fact is that these five responsa published here are ample evidence of the rich treasure of halakhic competency available in the Conservative movement of today.

This raises a question in the mind of this reviewer. The founder of the Conservative movement, Frankel, was the first Jewish scholar to publish a paper (*Entwurf*, etc.) describing the responsa literature as a valuable source for the study of Jewish history. Surely, then, in the movement founded by Frankel there should be a great amount of responsa creativity. Yet, actually, there has been a startling paucity of Conservative responsa.

Would not an historian find it strange that the Reform movement, which has been accused of being non-halakhic, should have produced, in recent years, six full volumes containing a total of about six hundred responsa (published by the Hebrew Union College Press under the auspices of its Alumni Association). Yet, from the Conservative movement, which is devoted to the halakhah and which

was directed by its founder to a special study of the responsa, there have appeared, as far as this reviewer knows, not more than twenty-five published responsa.

Why should this be? Of course, it may be that the Conservative scholars are much more serious about the status of a responsum than are the Reformers. To the Reformers, their responsa are meant not necessarily for governance, but for guidance, whereas the Conservatives, with their doctrine of continuous revelation, may well believe that each responsum of theirs is a fulfillment of the statement in the Yerushalmi (J. *Peah*, Chapter 2, page 17a) that whatever a worthy student will discover is a continuation of the revelation on Mount Sinai.

If, therefore, the Conservatives consider their responsa to be virtually *vox Dei*, then, no wonder that they are hesitant about writing them. To which attitude it might be worthwhile to recall what God said to Moses when he stood on Mount Sinai. He said: "Get off this high mountain. Whatever eminence you have, I have given you in behalf of the children of Israel" (*Berakhos* 32a). It is undoubtedly a fact that the children of Israel today are confronted with problems different from any that they had to face before. They need guidance in thousands of new situations: "The needs of Thy people are many and their knowledge is scant." Our people would be helped if there appeared numerous responsa every year from the Conservative movement. Why not? That the Orthodox will protest against them? What of it? There is no finer Orthodox respondent in our day than Moshe Feinstein. He is Orthodox enough to declare a Reform marriage null and void (*Even Haezer* 76) because the poor girl cannot obtain a *get* from her husband; and he questions whether one may sell a

Sefer Torah to a Conservative congregation (*Yoreh Deah* 174). He decides that a Sefer Torah that has been used in a Shul of "kosher Jews" should not be sold to Conservatives since that would be a lowering of its sanctity. Yet, even so pious an Orthodox scholar was severely attacked, and a whole volume of refutations was published against him under the title *Ma'aneh L'igeres*. There is no escaping Orthodox attack anyhow. Perhaps if the Conservatives would call their responsa "Conservative" responsa, as the Reformers call theirs "Reform" responsa, the Orthodox polemicists might consider them beneath their notice and not attack at all.

But all that is beside the main point. The Jewish community needs guidance in hundreds of new situations and the Conservative movement, above all, has the duty of providing it by producing a constant flow of adequate responsa. Only in this way will the Conservative movement meet the challenges voiced by Robert Gordis (p. 75): "The Rabbinical Assembly must undertake an active campaign for Jewish living."

Now as to the main part of the book: It is a symposium of essays written and previously published over the last decade. The editor and writer of the Introduction is Seymour Siegel and the authors cited are Louis Ginzberg, Mordecai Kaplan, Jacob Agus, Robert Gordis, Boaz Cohen, Louis Jacobs, Seymour Siegel (an essay besides the Introduction), Abraham Heschel, Will Herberg, Simon Greenberg, Louis Finkelstein, Max Kadushin and Ernst Simon. Then follow the five authors of the responsa, Isaac Klein, Aaron Blumenthal, Philip Sigal, David Feldman and Israel Silverman.

An important virtue in the book is the fact that the essays have not been so selected as to present a doctrinal uniformity. The contribu-

tions often differ with each other, a fact which indicates the "catholic" mood of Conservative Judaism in its being able to encompass varying points of view.

Yet, in all its variations, the book makes clear the basic ideas which guide the movement. The foremost one was enunciated by Frankel himself, "positive-historical." What he meant by that phrase was the opposite of what he understood the Reformers to stand for. It was a period of the rediscovery of Jewish social history and the Reformers tended to maintain that if an observance was found to be a product of history, then, as history changed, that observance could, if necessary, be abandoned. To which Frankel retorted that the contrary is true. Precisely because an observance grew up in history, it has special meaning and sanctity. Of course, this doctrine that the historical is, *ipso facto*, the sacred, implies that the people of Israel, the vehicle of its history, is itself sacred, and that revelation is not (or not only) a one-time event on Mount Sinai but is continual, manifesting itself through the Jewish people. Thus, in Conservatism, the history of the Jewish people has been raised to a higher level of reverence than in any other movement. Actually, the whole philosophy is the development of what the *Tosfos* (*Menahos* 30b) said: "*Minhag avosenu Torah hi*." Also, the historical emphasis in Conservative theology is implied in the rule that a test of the validity of a *minhag* is its enduring through time. It must be *tadur*, continuous, historical, as Isserles describes it in *Hoshen Mishpat*, 331:1.

This basic theology is discussed with many variations. Agus will have some doubts as to this adoration of a people as sacred. Kaplan will doubt whether the Jewish people at present is still a fit vehicle for creative Jewish life and, therefore, he has created a variation of

the movement, Reconstructionism, which means to achieve a nuclear reconstruction of the Jewish people, so as to make it become fit to become a vehicle of creative observance. But, all these variations in theology are subsumed under one general mood and are inspired by the effort to find a harmony between loyalty and liberty.

One more characteristic of the book should be mentioned. It owes something special, though unacknowledged, to Solomon Schechter. Schechter came to America from Cambridge. In Cambridge, he had absorbed the unique requirement of English philosophical and theological scholarship, namely, that no matter how profound or abstruse a theological or philosophical book must of necessity be, it is, nevertheless, the duty of the writer to present it in decent, clear and readable English. Only in England could a Jowett write a series of volumes on Plato and in doing so produce a monument of English style. Schechter absorbed that literary ideal in Cambridge. His essays on Judaism are in clear and even beautiful English. He brought this ideal with him and it is reflected in his disciples. So, although this is a symposium by many authors, the book, in general, is beautifully written. Besides being an important self-revelation of Conservatism, it is a joy to read.

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Another View of Jewish Law

Contemporary Halakhic Problems. By J. DAVID BLEICH. New York. KTAV, 1977. xviii + 404 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by DAVID NOVAK

ONE OF THE HAPPIER SIGNS of the intellectual maturity of the American Jewish community is the growing publication of halakhic literature in English. These books have come from all of the major segments of the Jewish religious community: from the Reform Solomon B. Freehof, the Conservative Isaac Klein, and the Orthodox Norman Lamm—to cite but three outstanding examples. The great majority of the work has been of high scholarly and literary quality.

The appearance of such books is occasioned, I believe, by both Jewish and American considerations.

Jewishly we are seeing, at least at the upper levels of the community, an expansion of learning. This generation has available to it numerous opportunities for serious Jewish study, both in institutions of specifically higher Jewish learning and in Judaic studies programs in many colleges and universities. Thus, there is a segment of the population that has the requisites for the intellectual demands made by halakhic discourse. Furthermore, the general intellectual sophistication of this group makes them primarily interested in how halakhah addresses itself to questions of current ethical debate.

On the American scene we are seeing an increasing interest in normative ethics—not so much in *what* ethics is (the concern of analytic philosophers), nor in *why* ethics is (the concern of metaphysicians), but in *how* ethics can guide contemporary moral decision making. In such fields as international

relations, intergroup relations and, especially, medical practice, thoughtful people in American society are looking for guidelines from every and any point of view. Considering the rich history of normative ethical discourse in Judaism, a number of contemporary Jewish thinkers are addressing themselves to these issues with substance and even eloquence.

One of the foremost Jewish thinkers in this area is the Orthodox cleric and professor of Talmud at Yeshiva University, Dr. J. David Bleich, who, for a number of years, has published a review of current halakhic literature in *TRADITION: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought*. *Contemporary Halakhic Problems* is a collection of these *TRADITION* columns, many considerably expanded.

A review of a book of this sort can be either theoretically anonymous or identifiable. On the one hand, a reviewer can pretend to be totally dispassionate, simply describing what the author has said. In this case, criticism will consist of pointing out errors of fact (*bekiut*), errors of logic (*harifut*), and technical and stylistic shortcomings. A theoretically identifiable review, on the other hand, will concentrate on the theory of the author (*havanah*). This is the only one that I feel I can honestly write, inasmuch as my work has dealt with many of the very same issues and these writings have both appeared and been reviewed in the pages of *JUDAISM*. Therefore, since I have an identifiable theoretical point of view, which is certainly different from that of Dr. Bleich, the purpose now should be to examine our theoretical differences, at the same time acknowledging points of agreement. Indeed, this type of dialogue is invited by Dr. Bleich himself. Whereas he is most reticent to offer his own specific halakhic rulings, being mostly content to describe

the current rulings of others, on the theoretical level he is most candid in expressing his own views. Hence, a review which is more than a dispassionate description must address itself to the book being reviewed precisely at this level.

Dr. Bleich's theoretical point of view might be termed "halakhic positivism," namely, that the halakhah is a wholly self-contained object, a body of normative content uninfluenced by any subjective considerations. He writes, "The law must be determined on its own merit and let the chips fall where they may" (p. xv). Following this assumption he posits the method of halakhic inference as deduction. "In order to understand the manner in which halakhic rulings are formulated, it is necessary to focus attention upon the *deductive* process by means of which definitive rulings are derived from fundamental principles" (p. xvii—italics mine). Let us now carefully examine the ramifications of this theoretical characterization.

Deduction is the method of syllogistic reasoning. Let us choose an example of such reasoning from a classical halakhic source subject to much contemporary discussion because of the whole issue of the role of women in Normative Judaism. The major premise proposes a universal category: "For *all* positive commandments, designated for a set time, women are exempt."¹ The minor premise proposes a specific judgment: "Listening to the sound of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is a positive commandment designated for a set time." By deduction we conclude: "Women are, therefore, exempt from hearing the sound of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah."² If this were all there is to the halakhic process, I would agree with Dr. Bleich's characteri-

1. M. Kiddushin 1.7.

2. *Shulhan Arukh*, O.H. 589.6.

zation of it as "deduction." However, the matter is not so simple.

Neither the Written nor the Oral Torah is presented as a series of universal propositions. Rather, we have in the Written Torah a series of seemingly unconnected *specific* prescriptions; in the Oral Torah *specific* cases and their rulings.³ From these data, general principles are *induced*. Induction is a general characterization of a group of data. Thus, the Mishnah characterizes the obligations and exemptions of women. The Gemara then shows how this is an induction based on a number of specific Scriptural prescriptions.⁴ And the Gemara also shows that there are a number of important exceptions to this general, inductive, characterization.⁵ "All" really means "many" or "most."⁶ Simple deduction of the cases from the principle is not satisfactory because the principle itself is not an a priori basis of deduction. The principle is clearly a posteriori, that is, empirical. Here is where the subjective factor in halakhah must be acknowledged, for the data which form the basis of the induction of the general principle must be *selected* for comparison. Thus, in the principle I have presented as an illustration, the data are connected by *hekesh*, analogy (e.g., "Mizvah A exempts women; mizvah B is similar to mizvah A; therefore, women are exempt from mizvah B as well").⁷ According to the Tosafists this type of analogical reasoning is

"subjective" (*dan me'azmo*).⁸ The Palestinian Talmud shows how any such analogy is refutable on the basis of objective logic alone.⁹ Therefore, in most cases of halakhic reasoning, "subjective" induction precedes the actual deduction of a particular practical ruling and is presupposed by it.

Furthermore, even after the completion of the Talmud, when halakhic principles were supposed to have been permanently set,¹⁰ new subjective factors were introduced into the halakhah which changed the meaning of these principles. The most notable example of this, in the context of the classical text chosen for illustration, is the permission introduced by Rabbenu Tam for women to recite the blessing before the performance of a positive commandment designated for a set time.¹¹ Heretofore, women had been exempt from these commandments, thus making the recitation of such an unrequired blessing prohibited.¹² Surely this permission, accepted by Ashkenazi Jewry, illustrates how something as subjective as the awakened religious desires of women played a crucial role in the halakhic process.¹³ Finally, the rules set down in the Talmud and in post-Talmudic works for choosing one normative opinion

3. See Chaim Tchernowitz, *Toldot Ha'halakhah* I (New York, 1934), pp. 102-103. Cf. my review-essay on I. Klein's *Responsa and Halakhic Studies* in JUDAISM 25,4 (Fall, 1976): 496.

4. B. *Kiddushin* 34a-35a.

5. Ibid. 34a. See P. *Pesahim* 8.1 interpreting Deut. 16:3.

6. See Maimonides' comment to M. *Kiddushin* 1.7 and *Hilkhot Avodah Zarah* 12.3. Cf. B. *Megillah* 23a, *Arakhin* 2b-3a, *Hullin* 2a.

7. B. *Kiddushin* 35a.

8. See B. *Sukkah* 31a, Tos., s.v. "R. Judah." Cf. Rashi *ad locum*. See *Encyclopedia Talmudit*, X, pp. 559ff.

9. P. *Pesahim* 6.1.

10. See B. *Baba Mezia* 86a.

11. B. *Kiddushin* 31a, Tos., s.v. "d'la."

12. B. *Berakhot* 33a interpreting Ex. 20:7.

13. See Isserles' note to *Shulhan Arukh*, O.H. 589.6. For the factor of women's religious desires being honored, see B. *Hagigah* 16b. For differing views of the current halakhic ramifications of this innovation, see J.J. Weinberg, *Serdei Esh* III (Jerusalem, 1966), no. 104, pp. 321-322; E. Waldenberg, *Ziz Eliezer* IX (Jerusalem, 1966), no. 2, pp. 25-29; M. Feinstein, *Igrot Mosheh*, O.H. II (New York, 1970), no. 2, pp. 176-177.

over another are more subjective than objective.¹⁴ On objective grounds, it was admitted that the halakhic views of the School of Shammai and R. Meir were more cogent, even though the practical law (*halakhah l'ma'aseh*) follows the School of Hillel and R. Judah.¹⁵

Dr. Bleich's halakhic positivism is more than a characterization of the halakhic process. That would be much more tentative. Rather, his halakhic positivism is designed to exclude the main point which separates the Conservative approach from that of the Orthodox. This is that the halakhah admits of internal development. (In personal conversation with me, Dr. Bleich was most emphatic in his rejection of any such principle.) Thus, on the one hand, we see halakhah characterized as a deductive, a priori system, analogous to mathematics, as emphasized by Dr. Bleich's colleague, Dr. Joseph B. Soloveitchik.¹⁶ On the other hand, we see it characterized as an inductive, a posteriori system, analogous to the empirical sciences. I have tried to show why I believe the inductive method is more appropriate. Having shown in this difference in theory, let me show how it leads to a difference in practical halakhic decision making.

An inductive approach is more flexible than a deductive one, as we have seen in theory. This can also be seen in Dr. Bleich's practical treatment of the contemporary bio-ethical issue of "brain death," namely, does the absence of recordable brain activity constitute death or not? On this question he

writes, "Brain death and irreversible coma are not acceptable definitions of death insofar as Halakhah is concerned. The sole criterion of death accepted by Halakhah is total cessation of both cardiac and respiratory activity" (p. 391). Although a halakhic argument could be made that cardiac and respiratory activity are contingent on brain activity,¹⁷ I agree with Dr. Bleich in rejecting this approach. He is most perceptive in seeing it as an attempt to narrow down the definition of who is alive, an attempt motivated by metaphysical assumptions antithetical to Judaism's consistent respect for *all* human life, irrespective of its condition. However, it seems to me, that this "either-or" view of the factor of brain death is an oversimplification. I have tried to show that brain death can be introduced into the halakhic process in this area as a criterion for deciding whether or not to remove life-sustaining equipment.¹⁸ For *recorded* brain death might indicate that the life sustaining equipment is, in effect, keeping alive tissue rather than a person. As such, it might justify removal of this equipment to see if the person has *spontaneous* cardiac and respiratory activity or not, which is the classical criterion. The halakhic justification for the introduction of this new factor is that it helps to resolve a conflict between two halakhic norms: the obligation to keep the living alive, and the obligation not to leave the dead unburied.¹⁹ Here, then, is a crucial decision influenced by the acceptance of one theoretical model over another.

Over and above my basic objection to the author's characterization of the halakhah as essentially

14. See, e.g., M. *Eduyot* 1.5; B. *Berakhot* 9a; *Hullin* 11a interpreting Ex. 23:2; B. *Eruvin* 13b; B. *Baba Mezia* 59a-59b; Alfasi, *Eruvin*, end.

15. B. *Yevamot* 14a; B. *Eruvin* 13b.

16. "Ish Ha'halakhah," TALPIOT, nos. 3-4 (1944): 665. For a critique of this conceptual model see my *Law and Theology in Judaism*, 1st series (New York, 1974), pp. 2-4.

17. See G. Rabinowitz and M. Koenigsberg, "Hagdarat Ha'mavet," HADAROM 32 (1970): 59ff.

18. See *Law and Theology in Judaism*, 2nd series (New York, 1976), p. 108.

19. Cf. *Responsa Hatam Sofer*, Y.D., no. 338.

deductive, I object to his sweeping exclusion of all but the Orthodox from the realm of Normative Judaism (pp. 155, 276). The acceptance of the historical development of Judaism does not deny its transcendent source.²⁰ On the contrary, it alone enables Jewish theology to see the indispensable conditions without which God's law cannot function in a human community. If Dr. Bleich insists that all but the Orthodox "deny the authority of the Halakhah, in whole or in part" (p. 155) he is going to have to devote much more effort to proving his point. One cannot so easily dismiss whole segments of the Jewish people from Normative Judaism. Let us hope that the author will deal with these fundamental questions in the future as meticulously as he deals with more specific issues for which he clearly has more sympathy.

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Faith Need Not Be Only Religious

The Faith of Secular Jews. Edited, and with an introduction by SAUL L. GOODMAN. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1976. 295 pp.

Reviewed by SARAH SCHMIDT

THE AMERICAN JEWISH community, attempting to live up to the expectations of an American society which feels most comfortable in perceiving Judaism as its third major religion, has tended to define itself primarily along religious lines—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform. Most American Jews are hardly aware that there exists another alternative within

Judaism, a Secularism with a long and respectable tradition, a Humanism which offers a highly viable option through which committed Jews may affirm their identity. It is Mr. Goodman's purpose, in compiling and editing a collection of excerpts which he calls *The Faith of Secular Jews*, to bring this concept of Jewish secularism to the attention of the American Jewish reading public; it is his hope that, if American Jews cannot accept normative Judaism as it is currently defined, perhaps they may find in the ideas of the secularists a point of view which will encourage them to maintain fruitful contact with Jewish culture and with the Jewish people.

Mr. Goodman himself is a committed secularist, and this book reflects his own wide ranging knowledge of, and experience with, the Jewish humanist tradition. He was born in Poland into a family of *hasidim-maskilim*, and received both a traditional and a secular education, simultaneously studying Talmud and the curriculum of the *Gymnasium*. After migrating to the United States in 1921, he was graduated from the Jewish Teacher's Seminary, Boston University, and the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research, where he majored in philosophy and was greatly influenced by the social philosopher and Jewish humanist par excellence, the late Horace M. Kallen. Since his student days, Mr. Goodman has been active in the Yiddish cultural movement as a writer and lecturer. He is a former director of the Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute, the mother organization of the network of Sholem Aleichem *Folk-Shulen*, and currently is a Professor of Jewish Thought and Yiddish Literature on the Graduate Faculty of Herzliah-Jewish Teacher's Seminary. He previously wrote a book of essays *Traditsye un*

20. See my "The Distinctiveness of Conservative Judaism," JUDAISM 26,3 (Summer, 1977): 307-308.

Banayung (Tradition and Renewal), for which he received the Zvi Kessel Literary Prize for the best book of 1968, and edited *Our First Fifty Years*, a historical survey of the Sholem Aleichem schools. It is clear that *The Faith of Secular Jews* is an extension of Mr. Goodman's lecturer-educator role, his attempt to bring his own philosophy of Jewishness to the attention of the young American Jewish intellectuals, academicians and students to whom the volume is especially addressed.

The Faith of Secular Jews consists of a lengthy introduction by Mr. Goodman and brief representative excerpts from the writings and lectures of several major Jewish secularists whose ideas have been influential in the American community. In an attempt to give some order to the collection, the editor has arranged these passages under various headings—Varieties of Affirmation Among Jewish Secularists; Universalism and the Jewish Heritage; Judaism, Jewish Nationalism and Assimilation; Israel and the Diaspora; Languages and Literature—so that many of the key authors are repeated and many of the selections overlap. The work is, therefore, best approached as an overall composite. What emerges is the thought of a wide range of both European and American Jewish secularists—Zionists and Diaspora Survivalists; Labor Zionists and Bundists; Hebraists and Yiddishists; Believers and Agnostics—all intent on demonstrating that the non-religious aspects of Jewish civilization, the philosophic, ethnic and literary components of Jewish history and experience, represent a historically rooted, legitimate choice for the modern American Jew. Many of the selections also stress Goodman's thesis that the religious component in Judaism is highly compatible with secularism as long as all

Jews recognize, and accept, the authenticity of other options. Indeed, perhaps the biggest surprise for this reviewer was the generally positive attitude towards religion expressed by a wide variety of secularists. As Abraham Golomb, a pioneer in the Yiddish secular school movement, notes in "From Secular To Integral Jewishness,"

... a division of Jewishness into religious separately and secular separately is not entirely possible ... Jewishness and Jewish religion are one current, one cultural way of life. ... To remain a secular Jew and reject all that is religious [is] just the same as if a person should forget his entire development until he has grown up through amnesia ... Secular and religious elements are like young buds and old branches. Merely religious Jewishness is like petrified fossils, dead embalmed religion. Merely secular Jewishness is like young fresh leaves, except that they are severed from the tree.

Most of Goodman's choices focus on their authors' serious attempts to define their own identities as Jews and their relationship to Jewish history and peoplehood. An ongoing theme, "the meaning of Jewish secular culture," pervades all of the categories, and, despite the variety of authorship, a fairly consistent consensus has resulted. Yudel Mark, a philologist, a folklorist, a historian of Yiddish culture, and the editor of the recent *Great Yiddish Dictionary*, summarizes the ideas of many of the others in this volume when he writes:

Our kind of Jewishness should be characterized as an attempt to reach a new synthesis between radical Reform and Orthodoxy; as a blend of intellectual values, and a way of life—a blend that does not forget that deeply rooted Jewishness is a fusion of religious, ethnic, and folkways ... This is the synthesis of everything that is constructive, that may serve in preserving our people, that may render meaningful and

beautiful its existence. This should be the synthesis of separating ourselves in differentness, and at the same time facing the whole world—even if it is hostile to us—in order that we may take from it whatever is worth taking, and in order to improve it eventually, so that it would be worthwhile to live in this world.

Perhaps the most useful and informative portion of the book is Goodman's well-documented introduction, in which he highlights the evolution and problems of Jewish secularism and places it in historical perspective, not as an aberration, but as integral to the development of Jewish thought and culture. The roots of Jewish secularism, Goodman maintains, are to be found in the beginning of Jewish history, starting with the kings of Israel and Judah and with the socio-ethical ideals of the prophets, and continuing, until the beginning of the seventeenth century, through the Spanish, Dutch, German, and East European movements in Jewish history. With the *haskalah*, secular Jewishness was reborn and, especially in Eastern Europe, this revival was to produce a rich Jewish culture with indigenous ideologies, movements, and literary creativity.

Goodman discerns the first transplantation of secular Jewishness to America in the 1888 *New Yorker Yiddische Volkszeitung*, a newspaper which, for the first time, stressed Jewishness among its mainly radical Jewish labor movement readers. But the real beginning of Jewish secularism in the United States came with the arrival of Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky, who gave to it a precise formulation, and who became the mentor and recognized leader of the secularists. The main tenet of Zhitlowsky's credo was that Jews are a nationality with a historic culture whose central characteristic is the Yiddish language. A descen-

dant of the *haskalah*, he strove to "normalize" the Jewish people, and in Yiddish and Yiddish literature he perceived a possible substitute for religion which could then become for Jews, as for other "normal" people, an option, a matter of personal choice. Indeed, in a selection that Goodman titles "The National Poetic Rebirth of the Jewish Religion," Zhitlowsky emerges strongly in favor of retaining, as an integral part of Jewishness, the "holy persons. . . , holy objects. . . , holy periods. . . , holy actions" of the Jewish tradition.

One can see that the Jewish people does not need to be ashamed of its Holy Days. *Life*, human life in its most sublime moments, is sanctified in the Jewish Sabbaths and holidays . . . Can it be that we, progressive Jews, will not take them to our hearts, not hold them sacred in faithful love?

Thus, Zhitlowsky favors the secularization of Jewish life not out of hostility to religion, but, rather, in order to make it possible for every Jew, believer or non-believer, to belong to the Jewish community.

While Zhitlowsky has formulated his theory from the vantage point of socialism, Goodman suggests that Simon Dubnow's philosophy of Jewish existence grew directly out of his evolutionist approach as a historian. Dubnow maintained that the cohesive factor most decisive in a people's destiny is not political power but spiritual strength. By spirit Dubnow did not mean religion alone; his conception of the spiritual included attitudes, values, and folkways. Just as Jewish life once revolved around the synagogue, so, in the twentieth century, it would be centered in an all-embracing secular *kehillah*, democratically organized and responsible for social, educational, and political, as well as religious, functions.

We aim, (wrote Dubnow,) only to negate the *supremacy* of religion, but we do not wish to eliminate it altogether from the people's cultural treasures . . . [E]very type of Jew may select from our culture whatever element or current is more pertinent to him.

Goodman sees Zhitlowsky's and Dubnow's work as seminal in the creation of a Jewish secular culture in America. He is critical of attempts made during the thirties and forties to modify Jewish secularism in accordance with the then current trends in American social science, and of sociologically trained Jewish writers, like Samuel Margoshes and Charles B. Sherman, who, in the fifties and sixties, expounded theses that American Jewish community life, including its secular-cultural ingredients, should be put in a religious framework. Ultimately, he focuses on the cultural pluralist theory of Horace M. Kallen, a theory proposed as early as 1910, but one which only recently has gained wide-scale acceptance. Just as Kallen postulated "the right to be different" as the essence of the American Idea, Goodman suggests this right as the essence of an American Jewish "religious secularism." Living in pragmatic, pluralistic America, the Jewish community cannot impose a preconceived faith on its members, but must grant them the right to choose freely those parts of their heritage which are pertinent to their own lives and values.

Goodman concludes by borrowing from John Dewey, who defined "religious" as "an attitude, a disposition, a commitment." Goodman maintains, therefore, that when any Jew makes an effort to inculcate Jewish values in his children, or when he is deeply involved in any sort of Jewish activity, or when he "bets his life" on the survival of his people, he is participating in an

experience that is religious in character. Today, in the United States, many secular Jews, non-conformists of the second and third generation, seek to identify themselves with the Jewish people through secular institutions such as B'nai Brith, the American Jewish Congress, and the various Zionist organizations. Though many of these Jews are non-religious and non-observant, Goodman suggests that they are, in fact if not in theory, Jewish religious secularists following a respected tradition,

a philosophy which perceives all that is good and valuable in non-Jewish cultures, but as seen through the prism of Jewish history, which shaped both the Jewish collectivity and the individual Jew.

Unfortunately, the rest of the volume does not live up to the high expectations generated by Goodman's introduction. The numerous excerpts (28) can easily become confusing to the reader with limited background; many are repetitive, and several are so brief as to be almost useless. Fewer, but longer, selections, in which the reader might have had exposure to a more sustained example of each essayist's style and approach, would have presented a stronger argument for Goodman's thesis and tied in more directly with his introductory material.

Nevertheless, *The Faith of Secular Jews* is an important book, if only because it attempts to fill a long neglected gap for the intelligent American Jewish reader who wishes to know and to explore the various Jewish options available to him. By presenting in English the thought of a seminal Jewish thinker like Chaim Zhitlowsky; by retrieving and translating the work of previously inaccessible secularists like Shmuel Niger, Yudel Mark and Abraham Golomb; by reminding us of the secular stance of

people of the stature of Ahad Ha'am and Simon Dubnow; by popularizing the universal accents of a Zionist theorist like Hayim Greenberg; by introducing us to the Jewish perspectives of American philosophers like Horace M. Kallen and Morris R. Cohen; by allowing us to focus, if only briefly and in bits and snatches of thought, on the possibilities of secularism as an alternative in a Jewishly pluralistic world, Mr. Goodman has done the American Jewish reading public an important service. *Kol hathalot kashot*—all beginnings are difficult—but this is surely a step in the right direction.

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On the Other Side of the Apocalyptic Coin.

Defenses of the Imagination: Jewish Writers and Modern Historical Crisis. By ROBERT ALTER. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977. 262 pp. \$8.50.

Reviewed by SANFORD PINSKER

"If the Jews have a historical destiny, it is to be at the crossroads of trouble . . ."
—Robert Alter.

Defenses of the Imagination is Robert Alter's second collection of essays and, like the pieces in *After the Tradition* (1969), it is filled with wide-ranging learning and genuinely impressive thought. The fifteen essays (which appeared originally in *Commentary* between 1969 and 1977) share a concern about "the troubled encounter between the literary imagination and modern history." At the same time, they insist upon investigating anti-apocalyptic tendencies rather

than affirming eschatological smash-up. Alter puts the need for a corrective balancing this way:

Some of the most original writers of our century, though keenly aware of the looming apocalyptic shadow cast by their historical situation, have chosen to affirm through their work the prerogatives of the imagination, using it inventively and courageously to demonstrate the very possibilities of human wholeness that the realm of politics has often seemed determined to destroy (p. xiv).

By concentrating on the imagination's saving power and on the special intensity with which certain Jewish writers cushioned the shocks of modern history, Alter provides both an alternative reading list and an opposing vision. Whether he chooses to talk about scholar-critics like Walter Benjamin or Gershom Scholem, poetry in Russian (Osip Mandelstam), English (Charles Reznikoff), or Hebrew (Lea Goldberg), or novelists like S. Y. Agon, Amos Oz and Bernard Malamud, the result seems always the same: learned, urbane, insightful, passionately moral.

Perhaps an example will make something of Alter's probing intelligence come clear. In a discussion of Walter Benjamin's insistence that "we can no longer speak of Kafka's wisdom. Only the products of its decay remain . . .," Alter resists those conventions of dreamy nightmare which have continued to dog Kafka criticism for some thirty years:

[Benjamin's] analysis brilliantly illustrates why talk about Kafka's fiction as dream and nightmare is finally loose talk. Dreamlike elements, to be sure, are abundant enough (but are they so rare in older kinds of fiction?); the close-worked structure of the parable, however, is the antithesis to the associative flow of the dream, even when the expected didactic content of the parable is

obscure, or elusive, or ironically negated by the parable's narrative form. What Benjamin perceives [and what, in *After the Tradition*, Alter argued at great length that a myth-hungry critic like Leslie Fiedler did not] is that Kafka, far from imagining spiritual life as having no connection with morality, writes out of a sense of desperation that the legitimating source of morality may have disappeared, and the "intransigence" of his imagination is precisely an expression of this desperation (p. 60).

Impatient with those who read without a sense of history or cultural context, we have to expect this sort of brainy hectoring from Professor Alter. In this case, however, what Benjamin/Alter think about Kafka is only *part* of the point. For Benjamin, literary texts were used "as points of departure (and of return) for larger [metaphysical] speculations." Ontology—rather than literary modes or even individual works—consumed his imagination. But, for Alter, this can be the stuff of which hidden agendas of Jewishness are made. Not that Benjamin wrote specifically about Jewish matters (he did not), but, rather, that one can feel his attractions to Zionism, to the Kabbalah, to the theology of Franz Rosenzweig pulsating behind, or between, the lines of his critiques of Kafka and Proust. Alter's point of comparison is Lionel Trilling and, for his purposes, it is an astute choice, pitting the hyperacculturated Trilling against the disenfranchised Benjamin.

The essay which follows—on Gershom Scholem—becomes very nearly a companion piece, one which outlines the career of Benjamin's boyhood friend in ways that suggest an alternate possibility. By that I mean, that had Benjamin followed his Zionist impulses and his inclinations toward a life of commenting upon traditional Jewish texts, he might not have committed

suicide after being turned back at the Spanish border in 1940. Perhaps . . . In any event, Alter's speculations are an exercise (albeit, an intriguing one) in the "what if" school of revisionism. But, in this case, the results shed firmer light on Scholem than on Benjamin. It is rather like Alter's exploration of Osip Mandelstam's "Jewishness"—at one and the same time an eloquent portrait of the Judaic strands which helped to form this culture Hero of Russian poetry and a sober admission that

Osip Mandelstam did not believe either in Judaism or Christianity; he believed in poetry. For a time, he was inclined to associate poetry with Christianity because of his notions of Christian order and of the apparent spiritual seriousness of Christianity. Eventually, he emphasized instead the crucial historical consciousness made available to him as a poet by the fact of his being a Jew, and perhaps the Jewish stress was a more congenial one now precisely because it involved not belief but a sense of participation in a long cultural tradition (p. 42).

Even more curious is Alter's contention that Benjamin Cooley, the Jewish antagonist of D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo*—rather than, say, Loerke, the Jewish artist-of-the-perverse in *Women in Love*—is the acid test by which Lawrence's anti-Semitism should be judged. Granted, the whole question of literary anti-Semitism is a disturbing fact, one which has often generated either a ranting defensiveness or an embarrassed silence on the part of Jewish critics. Once again, Alter is more balanced and more thoughtful than most. But if the only way to "damn" T. S. Eliot is by way of *praising* D. H. Lawrence, I grow suspicious. With regard to the Jews, both writers are wrong-headed—and, more important, equally dangerous. Eliot's brand of socio-cultural snobbism can no longer be dismissed by high-brow

apologetics, but Lawrence's paganism can have—indeed, *has* had—chilling consequences in our century's politics. It would be comforting if Alter were correct about Lawrence's "real thrust" as one directed "not against reason but the hypertrophied will;" unfortunately, the case is more complicated and, I would add, more threatening than that. The line between "blood-consciousness" and blood-thirstiness is a very thin one.

But that much said, let me return to my original observation about *Defenses of the Imagination*. One reviews a collection of essays knowing full well that equal justice cannot be meted out. Select a particular example for praise or quarrel and others languish without comment. Thus was it ever. But I will at least spare Professor Alter one indignity—namely, the accusation that his fifteen essays do not quite fulfill the promises of his title and prefatory remarks, that the discrete units do not comprise a unified whole. Few "collections" could satisfy such a criterion. In this case, it is enough that Alter has continued to investigate the ways in which the imagination responds to

the historical crises surrounding it; and even more to the point, it is enough that Alter writes individual essays that are dense, provocative and well-formed.

Instead, I shall end with Alter's belief that Jewish writers have not "heard a different message from history than writers from other backgrounds," but that "they have heard it at a higher decibel level, and sometimes perhaps sooner." A few years ago, a critic, grown weary of the way terms like "suffering" and "goodness" had clustered around American-Jewish novelists, announced the following:

... there has been a tacit conspiracy afoot in recent years to foist on the American public as peculiarly Jewish various admired characteristics which in fact belong to the common humanity of us all. The Jewish folk is imagined as possessing a kind of monopoly on vividness, compassion, humor, pathos, and the like . . .

The year was 1969. The book was *After the Tradition*. The writer was Robert Alter.

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TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

The articles in your Fall 1977 issue on the Arab-Jewish conflict raise some interesting points for discussion. In particular, one notes the divergent views on the future of Israel held by vocal and influential sections of the *Galut*. On the one hand, Kahane proposes the total de-Arabisation of Israel to accentuate and protect the purely Jewish nature of the state, while his opponents would rather see the coming-into-being of a secular Jewish state able to cope democratically with both the elements involved in maintaining a dynamic tension between them as Israel's contribution to resolving the impasse between conflicting goals and loyalties amongst her Arab and Jewish inhabitants.

It is probably true to say that the two nationalisms cannot ever be totally reconciled to one another; but a way must be found both to limit the trauma that the continued existence of Israel will hold for most Arabs, as well as containing the threat that a growing Arab population in Israel will pose for the fundamental nature and ethos of the Jewish state. If the Jewish nature of the state is diluted or abandoned, then the Jews there would once again become part of the *Galut*—this time heralding the beginning of the end of the Jews as a people. The question really is whether the *Galut* Jews, living in economic comfort and intellectual freedom amidst the materialistic splendour of the West, are prepared to condone the surrender of basic Jewish values in order to justify their prolonged exile, when only their decision to return is an affirmation of the Jewish role and spirit after the painful rebirth of the state of Israel in the 20th century.

The following proposals may assist in resolving this basic ambivalence of the *Galut* Jew.

Since Israel wants security and the Arabs want back some of the territory on which that security currently depends, it is necessary that both parties be satisfied with any arrangement that

is made. Thus, on the return of the disputed territory to the Arabs and the dismantling of all Jewish settlements located there, the following agreement would have to be entered into. It will ensure that all the territory handed back will remain demilitarized, that any attempt to ignore this proviso will lead to instant re-occupation of this land by Israel, and that any attacks on Israel from this disputed territory will allow Israel to retaliate across the border and also to re-occupy it if it is thought necessary, in order to prevent such further attacks. In Jerusalem, all Israeli settlements and new industrial developments will remain intact as this area would fall under the administration of the UN as an international city, but still able to function as an administrative Capital for Israel and any Arab state.

Suitable arrangements can be made with America to maintain an arms balance between Israel and the confrontation states, but this should stabilise once a peace treaty is signed. An overall American guarantee to all the states in the area to intervene on their behalf in the event of an attack on them by another major power would also be very helpful.

As a natural consequence of such a settlement, an immigration wave of Jews from the *Galut* can be expected. This will then decisively affect the future viability of Israel.

We do not need to de-Arabise Israel nor to placate the Arabs with what must be to them meaningless exercises in democracy, but to re-affirm our own commitment to the fundamental Jewish destiny. Israel was established on the principle of *ein breira* (no choice); perhaps we in the *Galut* have come to this point now.

Johannesburg, South Africa

FRED J. LICHTIGFELD

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

With the death of Breira (except for its Washington branch under the inde-

fatigable leadership of Arthur Was-kow) it is unfortunate that for the sake of the record letters to the editor must still be written concerning attempts to give posthumous legitimacy to that unhappy organization. (See Jacques Kornberg, *Zionism and Ideology: The Breira Controversy*, [Winter 1978]).

I must congratulate Prof. Kornberg on having produced the cleverest defense to have been made by an apologist for Breira. While previous efforts have faltered because of their authors' attempt to deal with the specific charges made by the organization's critics, Prof. Kornberg solves the problem by ignoring the charges altogether. Instead, he jumps to the safer ground of "categories" in describing the adherents of Breira: they are "liberal-radical" a few of them perhaps, but mainly "center-left." Even "liberal-radical" does not sound too bad: that liberal attached to the radical does wonders. Alas, the most salient point about the leaders of Breira was not that they were liberals or radicals, center, right, left, horizontal, vertical or upside down, but that they had a record, before entering Breira, of *anti-Israel activity*. My pamphlet documented that activity, in CONAME, which brought anti-Israel speakers to the United States and saw that they received a wide hearing, in MERIP, which exported the Palestine revolution, and in the Institute for Policy Studies, which I described most accurately as a "veritable hive of anti-Israel activity," to take the most egregious examples.

Thus, the issue is not the alleged determination of Breira's critics to "impose their ideological will" upon other Jews and censor their freedom to disagree with the majority It is, rather, the public's right to know when *individuals pass themselves off as something they are not*, and thus lead others where they do not want to go. I stated quite explicitly in my pamphlet on Breira that I did not attack the organizations whose naked hostility to Israel allowed all those who did not share that hostility to stay away. It was Breira, which pre-

tended to be what it was not, that needed exposure. And it is instructive that, once informed, American Jews have not wanted to be used as a pressure group against the Israeli government for the benefit of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

As for the platform Breira adopted at its Conference, which Prof. Kornberg seems to find proof of the organization's having been taken over by moderates, in addition to promoting a Palestinian state in familiar Breira-fashion, it was a jumble of New Left radical Jewish rhetoric and counter-cultural ideologies aimed at changing American society, the Jewish community, and relations between Israel and the Diaspora. Far from turning Breira in a new direction, the Conference merely ratified decisions taken earlier. Thus, the officers selected at the Conference in February 1977 had been chosen by Breira's Executive Board in October 1976. Those radicals (cops, liberal-center-leftists) who dominated its activities before the Conference would be dominating them afterward.

A good try, Prof. Kornberg, but whitening sepulchres was never an easy task.

Irvington, N.Y. RAELE JEAN ISAAC

PROF. KORNBERG REPLIES:

Prof. Isaac insists that I deliberately ignored the central issue in the Breira controversy—that Breira's leaders posed, deceitfully, as lovers of Israel. Naturally, she wants to set the rules of the game. I prefer not to play with her loaded dice.

I first became interested in Breira after reading her attack, and attended their national conference in February 1977. I met several on Breira's executive; most have the purest of Jewish pedigrees, having spent their professional lives in Jewish organizations. Some had been in the organizations that Prof. Isaac mentions and had quit, dissatisfied. Pro-Israel and sympathetic to Palestinian nationalism, they be-

lieved that an independent Palestinian State, along with recognition of Israel and security guarantees, was a feasible historic compromise. If Prof. Isaac believed this a bad or dangerous idea, she should have addressed herself to that issue instead of lowering the tone and quality of the debate with her extravagant talk of betrayal and deceit. For her, clearly, there is no *breira*—only loyalty or treason.

The era of the Khartoum Declaration has long since passed. Life was simpler then, for there were no Arabs with whom to talk. We could all say *ein breira*. Now there are policy alternatives and, consequently, honest differences of opinion among Jews. This is hardly the doing of New Left sorcerers. Now that thirty-seven prominent Jewish scholars and rabbis have expressed support for the Peace Now movement, Prof. Isaac will have her work cut out for her, checking out *their* pasts.

The issues and dilemmas that I wrote about have not faded with Breira's demise; they have become even more pressing. What is good for Israel? How does one measure the security of enlarged borders against the prospective dangers of ruling one million Palestinians, an alien people in the throes of a nationalist awakening? The genius of the Yishuv lay in its ability to disentangle itself politically, socially and economically, from the Arabs. Entanglement will engender multiple sources of friction and, inevitably, lead to a terrible struggle for dominion. The struggle will corrupt Israel and alter its character.

New trends in Zionism encourage

equanimity about this prospect. Statist religious Messianism in the *Gush Emunim* movement, the wider alliance between religion and the State, the new vocabulary of "historic" and "legal" rights, crowding out political pragmatism—all have influenced the Israeli body politic. Zionism was several times faced with the choice of working for a Jewish State in a part of mandatory Palestine or maintaining its commitment to an indivisible *Eretz Yisrael*. It had always chosen the former. But, now, the Begin government has majority support in its break with the former government's policy of territories for peace.

Many Israelis—both religious and secular—are opposed to these trends. All sides are engaged in a battle for public opinion. The Peace Now movement, accused of divisiveness in time of peril . . . argues, perceptively, that it is saving Begin from becoming a prisoner of the government coalition's right-wing.

North American Jews face the same dilemmas. We need not fear that the internal battle for public opinion will eventually compel Israel to give everything away. There is a very wide consensus among all who love Israel about her security needs. Those troubled by the policies of the Begin government must decide whether they wish others to wield all the instruments of political pressure. We must remember that silence is also a choice.

Toronto, Canada, and Jerusalem

JACQUES KORNBERG

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